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D. P. Mishra

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PREFACE

This monograph is an attempt to interpret the proto-historical period of Indian history mainly in the light of the traditional accounts preserved in Vedic and Puranic literature, and in the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. It has been the fashion with some recent historians and archaeologists to treat our traditional lore with suspicion, if not scorn. But it should not be forgotten that the very existence of a rich and ancient tradition is proof of a high degree of civilization even in that remote and dim past. The Vedic and Puranic literature and the Epics provide evidence of a highly organised society which a historian can ignore only at his peril.

Tradition has been the fountain-head of the intellectual and social life of the Indian people. There is hardly any department of indigenous knowledge which is not rooted in either the Vedic or the Puranic tradition. If we take, as some have done, the invasion of Alexander as the beginning of the historical period we are still dependent on the ancient historical tradition for our knowledge of the tribes whom Alexander encountered in the Indian sub-continent. If, on the other hand, we treat the life-time of the Buddha and Mahavira as the starting-point of the historical period, we have to delve into Vedic literature for our knowledge of the religious and social conditions against which the founders of Buddhism and Jainism felt compelled to revolt. The Śuṅgas, the Kaṇvas the Āndhras and the Guptas who were all responsible for reviving Hinduism derived their inspiration from the classical Brahmanic tradition. Although much was new in the revived Brahmanic cults, they had to draw upon the Vedic tradition for a justification of these innovations. The same process was repeated when another revival was successfully attempted

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during the mediaeval ages through the Bhakti movement. What is extraordinary is that despite the intellectual impact of the West we see even today attempts made to revive the essential features of the old way of life and synthesise them with the compulsions of the twentieth century life. The history of the past two thousand years is largely a history of such a synthesis between the old and the new—a factor that accounts for the remarkable continuity of tradition in India. What has made such a continuity possible ? We find that the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the Puranas constitute the bulk of the traditional lore which have conditioned the Indian mind for countless centuries. Even the most conservative among us will concede that a considerable portion of it could be described as highly fanciful and propagandistic. But in order to be effective, even propaganda must be based on some facts; the Puranas, in the form in which they are available to us, contain both facts and fiction, so dexterously interwoven that it is difficult to separate them. I shall cite only one instance; the personalities of the Buddha and Mahavira had left a lasting effect upon the people, and the opponents of Buddhism and Jainism could not belittle their influence. They, therefore, invented a fable (found in the Vishnu Purana) that these great men were the incarnations of Vishnu who wanted to mislead the Asuras into anti-Vedic ways of life so that the gods may be enabled to overpower them.

It is easy enough to detect the propagandist element in the Puranas but not in the Vedic literature, particularly the Brahmanas. There should be no doubt, however, that they too contain both fact and fiction. Although the Vedic literature has been studied since time immemorial, not much has been accomplished by way of disentangling historical content from myths and fancies. Scholars have interpreted the Vedas from different points of view, and according to Yaska, one of the early commentators, a school of historical interpreters had also come into existence. The latest of these com-

mentators was Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who treated the Vedas as divinely inspired. He heaped ridicule on those who tried to extract facts of history from it. Some of his disciples are erudite Vedic scholars. They are often tempted to interpret it historically but their attempts are obviously inhibited by the belief so vehemently held by their preceptor. The Sanatanist school, although perhaps a little more objective, is even more dogmatic about the Vedas for other reasons. However, there have been many European and Indian scholars who are free from such prejudices and have produced scientific studies of great value to the historian. European scholars have been the pioneers in the field and it is from them that many of the present Indian scholars have imbibed the scientific spirit. For quite a few decades after a scientific study of the Vedic literature was pioneered, the Puranas remained neglected as a source of history until F.E. Pargiter's devoted labours earned for them the status they deserved. Although some of his main theories have not received the support of scholars, his work, *The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* will continue to be studied with profit for a long time to come. After Pargiter a host of new scholars entered the field of Puranic studies among whom S. N. Pradhan and P. L. Bhargava, the authors of *Chronology of Ancient India* and *India in the Vedic Age* respectively, have substantially advanced our knowledge of the subject. If Pradhan's contention that the Vedic Divodāsa was a contemporary of Dasharatha (the father of Rama) is accepted, it would lead to the conclusion that Dāśarājña or the battle of Ten Kings, the only political event mentioned in the Rigveda, was fought at the end of the Tretā Yuga. As most of the hymn-makers flourished later than Viśvāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha, who were priests of Sudāsa, the victor of Dāśarājña, the bulk of the Rigveda would have to be considered the product of Dvāpara Yu ga. The theory that the Rigveda was a late work was first put forth by Shri S. V. Ketkar in his Marathi Jñānakośa on the basis of the internal evidence furnished by the hymns them-

selves. This is borne out also by other evidences. Pradhan's view that the Vedic king Divodāsa and Dasharatha were contemporaries lends indirect support to the same theory. It has been further argued that the Rigveda is mainly concerned with the entry of the Bhāratas into India and has very little to say about the other Aryan tribes who had penetrated India much earlier, such as the immediate descendants of Manu and Pururavas.

Bhargava has tried to reconcile the Vedic and the Puranic traditions in opposition to the views of Pargiter and has also drawn attention to the big gap that exists in the Puranic chronology of the Kurus. He has also shown that the Puranas have confused the latest homes of the principal Aryan tribes with their early settlements. I think this is true not only about the ruling Kshatriya tribes but also about some of the priestly clans such as the Āṅgirasas.

Research in proto-history has suffered from over-compartmentalisation of sources. Scholars in Vedic studies have largely neglected the Puranas and the Epics. Similarly those devoted to the Puranic studies have sometimes even gone to the length of ridiculing the Vedic hymns as a source of history. Pargiter himself was no exception. Archaeologists have likewise tended to hold those occupied with the Vedic and Puranic studies almost in contempt. The time has come when in the interest of research, a more integrated approach to all the available sources is imperative.

Having indicated my general approach to the subject, it might be useful to add a few words on the contents of the six chapters of this monograph. The first chapter is entitled 'Devaloka or the Original Home of the Indo-Europeans'. The consensus among scholars is that the original Aryan home lay in central Asia and I find myself in agreement with it. What, however, is new in the chapter is that I have arrived at this very conclusion on the basis of the geographical data contained in the Puranas particularly those given in the Vayu Purana and the Matsya Purana. Thus Puranic geography has been

found to support the theory which has so far been based on philology alone. A brief account of the inhabitants of Devaloka has also been given along with that of the Devas who constituted the ruling class. The word 'Indra' merely meant 'the king of the Devas' and hence there was a succession of Indras with different parentages and personal names.

The second chapter bears the title 'Pitṛloka or the Ancestral Home of the Indo-Iranians'. '*Pitṛ*' means 'ancestor' and thus 'Pitṛloka' literally means the 'Home of the ancestor'. I am grateful to Shri Bhagwat Dutt, an erudite scholar of our Ancient Indian literature for having first drawn my attention to the relationship between Manu and the Avestic Yima through his two Hindi volumes on Ancient Indian history. In this connection I am also obliged to him for a few quotations from the Brahmanas, which of course, I have verified. It is a pity that his firm conviction that the Veda being divinely inspired does not contain historical facts has prevented him from pursuing some of his views to their logical conclusion. I have also given extracts both from the Iranian Zend-Avesta and the Brahmanas to prove that the Vedic Manu and Yama (Avestic Yima) were brothers and that they originally lived in Khvarizm, now a part of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan. A short account of the Peshdadian and Kaiyanian dynasties of ancient Iran has been included at the end of the chapter. The affinity between the Irano-Aryans and Indo-Aryans in such matters as language, customs, cults and religious ideas has been emphasised.

The third chapter deals with the Asuras, the kinsmen of the Devas. The long drawn out fratricidal wars between the two resulted in the utter defeat of the Asuras who were not only ousted from Devaloka but also forced to yield eastern Iran and Afghanistan to their rivals. They finally came to the valley of the Indus and laid the foundations of what is now known as the Harappan civilization. Archaeological evidence including that furnished by the recent excavations in central Asia by Soviet archaeologists has been cited to

support the close affinity between the civilization of central Asia and that of the Indus valley. Finally, it has been suggested that in all probability the ancient civilizations of Sumer and Egypt received their first civilizing impulse from the Asuras of the Indus valley.

The fourth chapter takes up the question of the entry of the Aryans as distinguished from that of the Asura-Aryans. The view is expressed that at least three Aryan invasions are discernible. After the Asuras, the first to enter were the immediate descendants of Manu and Pururavas, the former occupying the Himalayan foot-hills upto Mithila and Vaishali and the latter descending upon the Indus plain and coalescing with the Asuras. Both these branches, known as Solar and Lunar respectively, have been jointly designated by me as the Early Aryans.

The fifth chapter concerns itself with the Bhāratas, the Aryans of the Rigveda. It has been shown that they were not connected with the Purus and were a fresh wave of Aryan entrants into India. They appear to have occupied parts of northern India at a time when anarchy prevailed there owing to the repeated invasions of the Haihayas from the south. Their expansion was checked by king Sagara of Ayodhya but after Sagara's death they resumed their career of conquest and carried their arms upto the Daṇḍaka forest.

The sixth and the last chapter argues for the separate identity of the Kurus from the Bhāratas, and treats them as a new wave of Aryan invaders. Branches of the Kurus also occupied Chedi-Kārūṣa and Magadha. For all practical purposes the monograph ends with the Mahabharata war but a very brief account has been added of the political conditions in the post-Mahabharata period. The causes which led to the supremacy of Magadha have been mentioned as also the shifting of political power to the east where it continued to reside upto the time of Harṣavardhana who established himself in Kanauj and made it the seat of his empire.

It is impossible to speak of the racial purity of any section

of the present-day Indian population. Apart from a few aboriginal tribes, who may have preserved their ethnic identity it is impossible to speak of the pure Aryan, Dravidian or Mongolian type in India.

While discussing the Aryan race some scholars have never failed to warn us that identity of language should not be taken to imply identity of race. However, this sound principle is not always followed when dealing with the Dravidian group of languages. That there is such a group of languages no one will deny but those who speak a Dravidian language are not necessarily Dravidians. It has still to be established that the Tamilians were the original speakers of the so called Dravidian language and that they had not picked it up from some other people who had established themselves in the south before their arrival there. These are questions which still await answers at the hands of our scholars.

The problem of national integration which we are facing in India today is not a new one. Our ancestors had to contend with it every time a fresh wave of people came from outside and permanently settled down here. The priestly class have been accused of forging genealogies for new rulers to invest them with the dignity of ancient lineage. Such things may have been done by courtiers and poets but it did have the effect of integrating the new rulers with the indigenous people. It is not improbable that this process operated when the authors of the Puranas attached the Bhārata genealogy to that of the Purus, and the genealogy of the Kurus to that of the Bhāratas. While this has undoubtedly complicated the task of historians, we have to remember that the life process of a people pays no attention to the demands of the modern researcher.

Finally I hasten to add that no finality is claimed for the theories put forward in this monograph. I am not a historian by profession. I am merely a student of history, of which the ancient period has had a special fascination for me from my school days. This also led me to make a thorough study of the ancient Parsi literature as gradually the convic-

tion dawned on me that it was next to impossible to correctly appraise the Indian proto-historic period without a comprehensive knowledge of Zoroasterian literatutre. It will perhaps be admited that most of the research done on the proto-history by scholars is tentative. Equally tentative are the theories propounded by archaeologists. Most of them might do well to examine their views constantly in the light of new knowledge derived from research. What I find objectionable is that tentative views are allowed to find their way into our school textbooks. This is not helpful for national integration. The writing of history cannot and should not be permitted to become a command performance. However, the Government of India would do well to follow the example of the UNESCO and initiate a scheme for the publication of an objective and critically documented series of volumes on the history of India.

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D. P. Mishra

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Chapter
One

Devaloka or the Original Home of the Indo-Europeans

ANCIENT INDIAN literature is full of anecdotes describing contacts between gods and men. There is hardly any among the eighteen Puranas which does not mention names of kings and sages, and occasionally even of common men and women, having had various kinds of relations with them, particularly with Indra. We have all along treated this relationship as mythical, but perhaps it would be rewarding for historical research to set aside all prejudices and search for truth, if any, which lies buried in these stories even as the archaeologist's spade unearths a few facts from the mute, wordless depths of the earth.

Almost all ruling families of ancient India claim descent from Manu Vaivasvata—the Solar Dynasty from his son Ikṣvāku and the Lunar from his daughter Ilā. In the second *maṇḍala* of the Rigveda occurs the following :

Sa vṛtrahendraḥ kṛṣṇayonīḥ purandaro dāsīrairayadvi Ajanayanmanave kṣāmapaścha satrā śamsam yajamānasya tūtot. "Indra, the killer of Vṛtra and destroyer of cities has overthrown the army of the black Dasyus. He has created land and water for Manu. May he fulfil the desire of the sacrificer."

It is true that devotees attribute their achievements to the deities they worship and this is the conventional interpretation of this Rigvedic verse. But in some cases another interpretation is possible. Indra may have been a historical human being, ruler of a former homeland of the Vedic Aryans. He may have himself led them in battles in strange lands during

the period of their expansion. Manu may have been merely his representative left behind to govern the conquered territories in the same manner as Mohammad of Ghor entrusted his conquests to Qutbuddin Aibak after defeating Prithviraj Chauhan. Indeed, we cannot at this stage say whether these territories lay in Iran or in India.

But Indra did not fight only for Manu. According to the Rigveda he is said to have fought and defeated Śaṁbara for King Divodāsa, Pipru for Rijiśvan, Chumuru and Dhuni for king Dabhīti, Śuṣṇa for Kutsa, Namuchi for Nami and Vala for the sages whose cows had been stolen by the Paṇis. As a matter of fact, the Rigvedic hymns in praise of Indra present a picture of an Aryan war-lord rather than that of a heavenly deity. He is also called *Purandara*, the destroyer of cities. With the discovery of the Indus Valley civilization, centred on cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro, this name has received added significance. The destruction of these cities is being attributed to Indra, and Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler has dramatically stated that "on circumstantial evidence...Indra stands accused."[1] Supporting Wheeler, Stuart Piggott has painted the following portrait of Indra :

> "The greatest god of Rigveda is Indra, to whom about the one-quarter of the hymns are addressed, and he is the apotheosis of the Aryan battle-leader; strong-armed, colossal, tawny-bearded, and pot-bellied from drinking, he wields the thunderbolt in his more god-like moments, but fights like a hero with bow-and-arrows from his chariot. He is 'strong, young, immortal and ancient' as Keith puts it, his appetite is enormous and he devours prodigious quantities of beef, porridge and cakes, swilling them down with the intoxicating soma or with mead, and both his drunkenness and its afeer-effects are described with convincing fidelity. He is cattle-raider, and above all he is the destroyer of the strongholds of the enemy, the victorious leader of the Aryans in their conquest of the hated ancient empire in the Punjab."[2]

This portrait of the favourite God of the Rigvedic Rishis is somewhat revolting, but as Piggott was describing the destruction of an admired ancient civilization at the hands of a supposedly barbarous, invading race, he has painted its leader as the arch-barbarian. His catalogue of Indra's sins has been summed up by Bloomfield in a few words when he says that "Indra embodies so completely, the human qualities of brag and bluster, glutonny, drunkenness and lust as to make him the peg upon which to hang scepticism."[3]

The reason for all these unfavourable opinions seems to be that Indra has been judged as god and found wanting. If from the very outset Indologists had accepted him as a human personality they would have judged him against the background of the age in which he lived and as the leader of an invading people fighting against odds in strange lands. If justice is to be done to Indra he should be compared with the leaders of other invading people in historical times, such as Alexander the Great, whose "brag and bluster, glutonny, drunkenness and lust" have been recorded by his contemporaries and are not based upon inferences drawn from a work like Rigveda. These weaknesses are, as mentioned by Bloomfield, "human qualities" and it is a welcome sign that even those who first had imagined Indra as a divine being have now come to regard him as a human being. V. S. Ghate believes that the Vedic gods are just the phenomena of nature, personified and glorified. However, while dealing with Indra he is obliged to confess that "it is not possible to say exactly what phenomenon of nature is represented by this god" and is driven to the conclusion that "Indra appears all through as the national hero of the invading Aryans, their struggles against the Dasyus whom they had to overcome and drive before them". While not omitting the dark aspect of Indra's personality Ghate brings out also its good points in the following sentences :

> "Indra is a terrible warrior, a gracious friend, a god whose shafts deal destruction to his enemies, while they bring

deliverance and prosperity to his worshippers (VII. 27.3; 37. 3; 31.6.). He is the most fatherly of fathers, has love and sympathy for mortals (VII. 23.5.). He controls the destinies of men, he is the enemy of the irreligious, a destroyer of the Dasyus and a protector of the Aryas."[4]

R. N. Dandekar has gone even a step further and treated Indra entirely as a historical personage.[5] D. D. Kosambi is also inclined to the view that Indra is "a deified ancestor warleader, who had actually led the Aryans in the field or perhaps a succession of such active human chiefs".[6]

Let us now see whether there was only one Indra or as Kosambi hints 'a succession' of Indras. In this connection the work done as far back as the first decade of this century by Shastri Rajaram Ramkrishna Bhagwat has been totally ignored by students of the Rigveda. Regretting this, V. S. Sukthankar has remarked that Rajaram was "the only Indian scholar, who in recent times had seriously studied the Vedas and tried to arrive at an independent conclusion as to their meaning and value", and that his work has "passed into unmerited oblivion".[7] Rajaram Bhagwat, in his work entitled *Key to Interpret Veda*, published in 1907, has brought to light a number of different Indras. According to him the Indra who fought Chumuru, Dhuni, Pipru, Śaṁbara and Śuṣna bore the name Sumantu. The one who battled against Arbuda was known as Rijisvana and his mother's name was Śavasī. Another one is called Pākasthāmā with Kuruyāna as his father. In the fourth *maṇḍala* (RV. IV, 18, 12) occurs a verse praising Indra for having lifted up his own father by his feet and killed him. This may have been yet another Indra.

The conclusion reached by Rajaram Shastri is that the Devas were a race of men and that their kings were known as 'Indra'. This theory, based on the Rigveda, receives ample support from subsequent literature. The Puranas mention a number of kings both of Solar and Lunar dynasties including Dasharatha, the father of Rama, who participated in the Devāsura wars on behalf of the Devas. Raji, another Aryan

king, is said to have been approached both by the Devas and Asuras for assistance and that he had demanded Indrahood as his price. The Asuras rejected the offer by saying that their Indra was Prahlada but the Devas agreed to Raji's condition. Raji won victory for the Devas but the ruling Indra duped him and his sons. Another Aryan King Nahusha, the grandson of Pururavas, gained Indrahood for a brief period and was ousted by the sages for his attempt to seduce Indra's wife Śachī. Vasu, conqueror and king of Chedi, also known as Vasu Chaidyoparichara, was a friend of Indra and obtained a celestial chariot from him. Vasu is also reputed to be the first to have worshipped Indra's flag (*Indradhvaja*). As there is a gap of many centuries between these kings the conclusion seems inevitable that there were many Indras. It is also evident that while the Indras, as kings of the home country, assisted in the colonisation of new lands, once the colonies had been consolidatad their rulers paid back the debt by assisting the home-country in its wars against their Asura neighbours. It would also appear that the home-country had, as usual, developed a superiority complex and would not tolerate a mere 'colonial' like Nahuṣa to occupy its throne. Even the women of the home country shared this complex as is shown in the desertion of Pururavas by Urvashi.

The important question remains whether we can locate this land of the Devas, the former homeland of Vedic Aryans. *Vāyu Purāṇa* seems to provide an unambiguous clue. It gives a detailed description of the mountain Meru and after locating the various gods on its various peaks concludes with the following two couplets :

Nākapṛṣṭham divam svarga iti yaiḥ paripaṭhyate Ved-avedāṅgavidvadbhiḥ śabdaiḥ paryāyavāchakaiḥ. Tadetatsarva devānām adhivāsa kṛtāttmanām Devaloko girau tasmin sarva śrutiṣu gīyate. "This is the abode of the holy gods. Those learned in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, call it Nāka, Diva and Svarga by using various synonyms. All the four Vedas also place the Devaloka on this mountain."

It is difficult not to accept the Puranic location of Deva-loka on and around the Mount Meru. What is of even greater importance is to see if it is possible to identify Meru itself with any existing mountain or plateau. A number of scholars, who have not dismissed the Puranic geography as mere myth, are agreed that Meru is to be identified with the plateau of Pamir. Dr. K. L. Daftari in his book *The Astro-nomical Method* has identified Meru with the Pamir and the areas round about it.[8] Dr. V.S. Agrawala in his Hindi work *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa—A Cultural Study*, has also come to the same conclusion.[9] Dr. Buddha Prakash in his *India and the World* is inclined towards the same view.[10] The most recent attempt to identify the Puranic geographical concepts has been that of Dr. Muzaffer Ali, the late Professor and Head of the Department of Geography in the University of Saugar. He has not only equated Meru with the plateau of Pamir but has gone into greater details and indentified the mountains, lakes, rivers and regions named by the Puranas. But before we enter into Puranic geography it would be advisable to give a description of the plateau of Pamir, placing it in its proper geographical perspective.

In the Persian language Pamir is called '*pae-meer*' which means 'the foot of meer'. This appears to be the same as *pāda-meru* or to give the proper order of words in Sanskrit, *meru-pāda* meaning 'foot of Meru'. As Meru is a plateau of the greatest altitude in the world the Iranians also called it *Bām-e-Dunia* or 'the roof of the world'. The Chambers' World Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary gives the following information about this high plateau:

> "A dissected plateau of 15,000-16,000 ft. from which higher mountains rise, mostly in the Gorno Badak-shan autonomous terr. in Tadzhik SSr. USSr, extend-ing into Sinkiang (China) and Wakhan (Afghani-stan), to the Indian border. When used of the mts. themselves, the term is often the plural, the Pamirs. In the mountain knot meet the great ranges of C. Asia, the

Himalayas; Kunlun; Tien Shan, Hindu Kush. The region is c. 150 m. square, bordered on 3 sides by ridges: the Trans-Alai with Lenin peak (23, 382 ft) in the N; the Sarikol range on the E. paralleled by the Muztagh ata range, with Qungur (25,000) and Muztagh-ata (24,388); the Hindu Kush on the S. The Akademia Nauk range, S. of the Trans-Alai, contains Stalin peak (24,590 ft), highest in all Russia. The region drains mostly W. by the Oxus and its tribs. in parallel, open steppe like valleys 12,000 or 13,000 ft. high, clogged with glacial debris, with glaciers and screes descending from the mts. which rise 3000 or 4000 ft. above them. From the long slopes the rivers break away at last through great gorges. Among many lakes are Karakul (120 sq. m.) and Rang-kul in the N-E; Shivakul or Victoria (100 sq. m.) in the great Pamir in the S. from which the Pamir River flows to the Panj or main stream of the Oxus."[11]

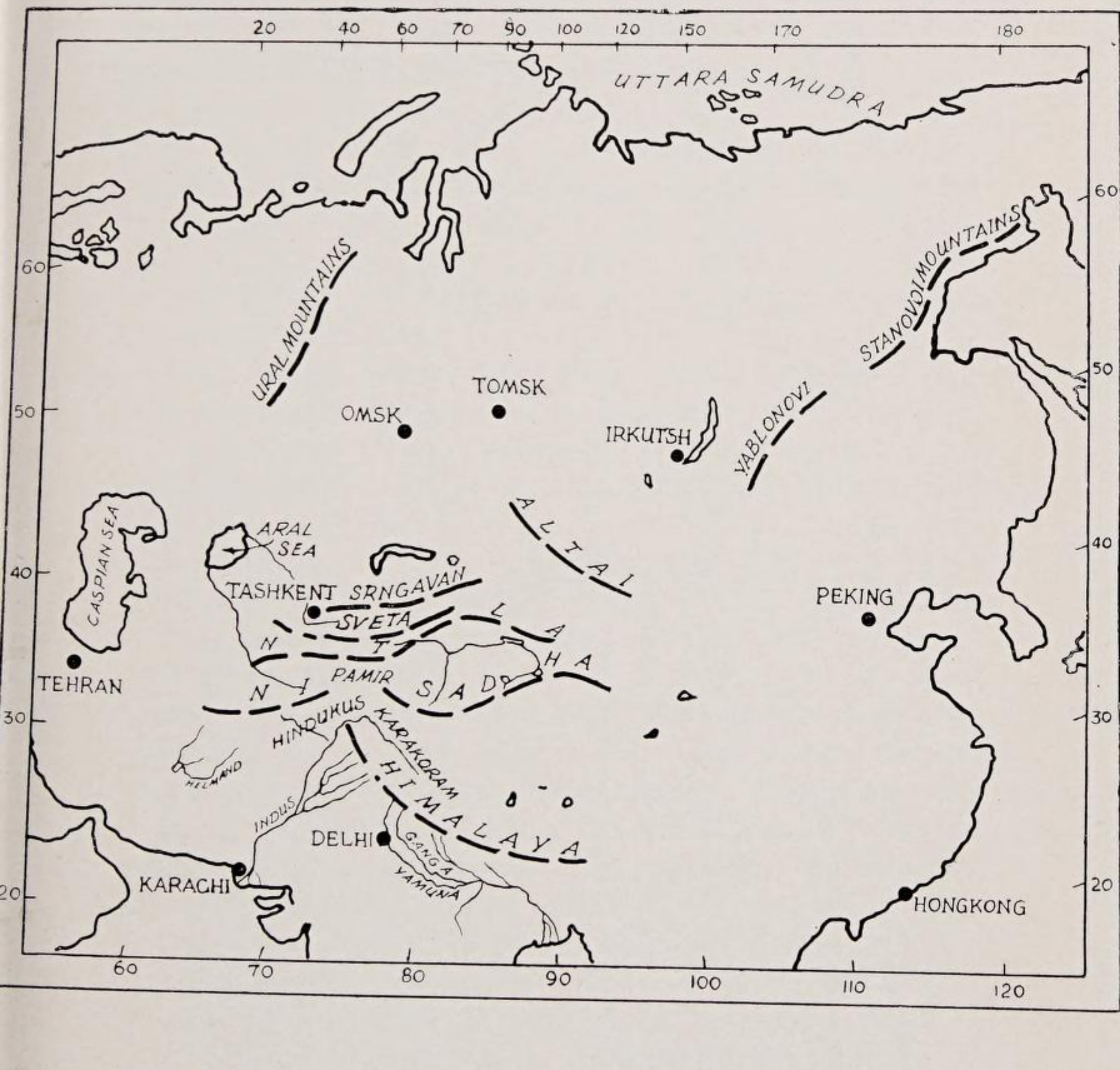
According to Angus Hamilton the Pamir plateau covers some 30,000 square miles and in its southern limits connects the Mustagh Ata with the Hindu Kush by a ridge which serves as the water parting between basins of the upper Oxus and the Indus. To the north it acts as the water divide between the Zarafshan and the Syr-darya...The Tarim River constitutes Lob Nor, the basin of Chinese Turkestan by draining the northern water-shed of the Tian-shah, Mustagh, and Kun Lun mountains, much as the Aral Sea receives through the Amu-darya and the Syr-darya the drainage of Russian and Afghan Turkestan. At the same time, while the flow is from the northern slopes of the Pamir plateau, the Hindu Kush and the Paropamisus go to the Aral, the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush drain to the Arabian Sea through the Indus river, in the drainage system of which North-eastern Afghanistan is embodied. Although the areas already mentioned drain to the Aral and to the Indus, a much larger proportion of the country, at least 20,000 square miles in extent, drains into the Seistan Lake, in the main through the Helmund river.

Let us now look at this area in the contemporary political map. With changes in the political set-up old regions often receive new names. Afghanistan has remained the same and continues to include its share of Turkistan area under the old name of Afghan Turkistan situated on the south of the Oxus, but Persia has now assumed its ancient name of Iran. The area west of Pamir and north of the Oxus, formerly called Russian Turkistan, is now split up into the five Soviet Socialist Republics of Turkemenistan, Uzbekistan. Tajikistan, Kirghiz and Kazhakistan. East of Pamir lies Sinkiang which was formerly known as Chinese Turkistan. The Chinese have now built roads to connect it with Tibet and in so doing have encroached on a part of Indian territory in Ladakh. On the south of Pamir lies India, a part of which has now become Pakistan. Both Kashmir and the so-called 'Azad Kashmir' touch the plateau of Pamir and only a strip of a few miles of Afghan territory separates India and Pakistan from Soviet Russia. Thus the plateau of Pamir is not only a geographical knot from which radiate mountains in all directions but from time immemorial has also been a focus of international politics.

Let us now see what the Indian tradition, as embodied in the Puranas and the Epics, has to say about Meru with which we have identified the Pamir. Like the Pamir, the pivot of Asiatic geography, the mountain Meru is the key with which the geography of the Puranas can be unlocked. According to the Puranas the world is divided into seven *dvipas* or continents of which the central continent is Jambu-dvipa. In the centre of Jambu-dvipa stands the golden mountain Meru. Meru is not only described as the centre of Jambu-dvipa but also of the entire world. From this focal point four major rivers take off and flow in the four directions. The Puranas also treat Meru as a great watershed and name Vakshu, Sita, Bhadrasoma and Alakananda flowing towards West, East, North and South respectively. Among these rivers, Vakshu has all along been recognised as Oxus or Amu Darya. The Chinese call the Tarim-Yarkand river as Sito and there is

JAMBŪ DVĪPA

MAP 1



no dispute about its identification with the Puranic river Sita. Dr. Ali identifies Bhadrasoma with Syr Darya, the Jaxartes of the Greeks, and in view of the weighty arguments advanced by him, we may accept his identification. The fourth river Alakananda is, of course, Ganga. It is important to note that Alakananda is only one of the four Gangas. The Puranas treat all the four rivers mentioned above as having their source in Ākāśa-Gaṅgā falling on the top of Meru from its source in the Milky Way and thus give all of them the common name of Ganga. Thus according to the Puranas the Oxus (Amu Darya), the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) and Tarim-Yarkand are as much a part of Ākāśa-Gaṅgā as our Alakananda. Dr. Ali clarifying its name 'Tripathagā' makes the following observations :

> "The Ganga is a celestial river which has been very picturesquely compared in the Puranas to the Milky Way. The first part of the statement, therefore, refers to the 'Starry River' in the heavens (i.e., the Milky Way) which one sees revolving round the North Pole in the Northern Hemisphere, as though it were attached to the Pole by an invisible bond. The 'abode' of this celestial river (in the literal sense) on the earth is the extensive, snow-bound and glacier-mantled high plateau of the Pamir (the Meru) on which that river, i.e. the Ganga 'descends' from the sky, obviously in the form of snow. The Ganga thus remains suspended on this mountainous region above the snow-line or in Puranic language, rests on the head or in the tresses of gods and deities. Not only does the 'heavenly river' rest on the plateau of Meru but also on the high ridges and ranges which surround and radiate from the Meru, or the Pamir region. Thus the 'river' runs several times 'round Meru', according to the Puranas before it descends further down by melting or as a glacier. It should be noted that at this stage, i.e. before melting, the Ganga rests or remains suspended on the high mountain peaks and ridges and does not flow into valleys or plains.

When the glaciers melt and their waters accumulate in the lakes at the foot of the mountain and issue from there as rivers, the Ganga assumes the form of water channels i.e., rivers in the real sense. The Puranas mention four main lakes and four main rivers which originate as such and flow to the four cardinal points of Jambu-dvipa.

"It will be realised from the above discussion that the Puranas intend to bring out three stages in the evolution of Ganga :

(i) They connect it with the heavens by comparing and identifying it with the Milky Way. This is its celestial stage.

(ii) As the snow falls on the high mountains they identify it with the snow cap of High Asia which covers its high ranges and its central knot, the Pamirs. Ganga is just a cover or belt of snow and ice at this stage. This is the Ganga at its 'snowy stage'.

(iii) From this common source, i.e. the Pamirs, the snowy Ganga melts and divides into the four main rivers of Asia which radiate in different directions. The Ganga at this stage becomes a stream or rather four streams of water. The Puranas have thus rolled the accounts of the glaciers of Asia, the rivers of Asia and their origin into one, in a simple but colourful statement,which is repeated practically in all the Puranas.

"The Puranas realised the extent of Meru and its extensive snow cover, hence they gave it great importance, as is evidenced in their detailed account of Meru, but they also visualised the extensions of the snow-cap towards the south along the high Himalayan ranges, hence their Ganga (i.e., the Snowy Ganga) sprawled far to the south and southeast of Meru on the summits of the Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan ranges. They, therefore, consider that all rivers which originate in the snows of the Himalayas, are the manifestation of the Holy Ganga. It is no wonder that the various 'Gangas', Indian and extra-Indian, for

instance, the Maha-Ganga (Hwangho), Ganga (Ganges), Krishnaganga, Vishnuganga, Kaliganga, Gauriganga, Dhuliganga, etc., have been so named because they all derive their waters from the common source—i.e., the Snowy Ganga of the Puranas."[12]

Dr. Ali's identification of the four rivers issuing forth from the four sides of Meru with the four rivers flowing from the Pamirs seems very convincing. That even up to the seventh century A. D. this equation was taken for granted at least by the Chinese is proved by what Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, has to say about the plateau of Pamir. Hiuen Tsang, on his return journey from India to China, passed through this tract. We quote below the description given by him as translated by Samuel Beal :

"Skirting the mountains and crossing the valleys, advancing along a dangerous and precipitous road, after going 700 li or so, we come to the valley of po-mi-lo (Pamir). It stretches 1000 li or so east and west, and 100 li or so from north to south, in the narrowest part it is not more than 100 li. It is situated among the snowy mountains; on this account the climate is cold, and the winds blow constantly. The snow falls both in summer and spring time....

"In the middle of the Pamir valley is a great dragon lake *(Nāgahṛda)* : from east to west it is 300 li or so, from north to south 50 li. It is situated in the midst of the great Tasung ling mountains, and is the central point of Jambu-dvipa....

"...To the west of the lake there is a large stream, which going west, reaches so far as the eastern borders of the kingdom of Ta-mo-si-tie-ti (Tamasthiti), and there joins the river Oxus (Fo-t'su) and flows still to the west. So on this side of the lake all the streams flow westward.

"On the east of the lake is a great stream, which, flowing north-east, reaches to the western frontiers of the country of Kie-sha (Kashagar), and there joins the Si-to (Sita)

river and flows eastward, and so all streams on the left side of the lake flow eastward."[13]

It is significant that while the Puranas make Meru the central point of Jambu-dvipa, Hiuen Tsang makes the Pamir its centre. He says that its great dragon lake *(nāgahṛda)* which is no other than the well-known Sarik-kul lake, is situated in the midst of the great Tsung ling (the Chinese name for the Pamirs) mountain, and is the central point of Jambu-dvipa. Further, his description of Sito agrees with the river Sita mentioned in the Puranas.

Now let us turn to the Varṣas or regions of Jambu-dvipa. Although with gradual advance in their geographical knowledge the authors of the Puranas describe Jambu-dvipa as *consisting of nine Varṣas* (regions), the original, pre-Puranic conception of Jambu-dvipa consisted of four broad divisions situated on the four sides of Meru (as mentioned in the *Mahabharata)*. On the north of Meru lay Uttarakuru-Varṣa comprising all the lands from the Oxus and the Caspian sea to the Arctic Ocean (Uttara-Samudra) i. e. Samarkand, Bokhara, and the vast region of Siberia. On the east of Meru was placed Bhadrāśva-Varṣa which, according to Dr. Ali, comprises modern Sinkiang and northern China. We would like to add that Bhadrāśva included only that portion of Sinkiang which lies south of the Yarkand river and that the tract on the north of it formed part of Uttarakuru. The Varṣa south of Meru is, of course, Bhārata. As regards the region lying west of Meru named Ketumāla Varṣa, Dr. Ali gives a list of more than twenty principalities or sub-regions which in the medieval ages bore names almost identical, although corrupted, with those mentioned in the Puranas. On the strength of this striking evidence he makes the following interesting observation :

"Ketumala signified practically the whole of the ancient Bactria which included the whole of the present Afghan Turkistan (north of Hindukush), the lower Hari Rud Valley, the basin of Murhghab Kashka system (all south of the old bed of Amu Darya) and the basins of the Surkhan,

Kafirnigan, Vakhsh and Vaksu rivers bounded on the north and west by the Hissar Zarafshan parapet and its south-western extension which touches the Oxus near Kalif. In Medieval times it comprised the territories of Badhis, Ghar-chistan, Gurgan, Tucharistan, Badakshan, Ragh and Darwaz south of the Oxus, and Chaghanian, Khuttal, Karataghin and Rasht north of the Oxus."[14]

This broad division of Jambu-dvipa into four Varṣas was later on sub-divided. In his article on 'Sakadvipa' Dr. Buddha Prakash says :

"It is to be noted that Sakadvipa does not figure in early Indian geographical treatises, Brahmanical or Buddhist, where the earth is divided into four regions (dvipas) only, viz. Bharatavarsa or Jambu-dvipa, Ketumala, Bhadrasva-varsa and Uttarakuru. Later on, when the horizons of knowledge widened under the Mauryas and the Kusanas, the conception of Jambu-dvipa also underwent a transformation. It was no longer confined to the geographical boundaries of India proper, but was enlarged to embrace many other regions of Asia, viz. Uttarakuru (Ottorocorrae of Ptolemy, perhaps, the state of Tarim basin, Chinese Turkestan), Harivarsa, probably Sughd famous for horses, Ilavritavarsa, possibly the basin of the Ili river, Bhadrasva-varsa, the valley of the Sita (Jaxartes), Ketumala, through which the river Svaraksa (probably Vaksu or Oxus) flows, Kimpurusavarsa, centering round Hemakuta and signifying the Himalayan regions, Hiranmayavarsa or Badakshan region, noted for mines of precious metals and jewels, and Ramyakavarsa, probably the Rami, Ramni Islands (Lambri) in the Far East, besides Bharatavarsa or India. Thus Jambu-dvipa began to denote Greater India rather than India proper. It became a world by itself having its own sub-continents. Having its centre at Meru, (probably the Pamirs), it projected northwards up to the Ili Basin and stretched southwards to India."[15]

Although Dr. Buddha Prakash and Dr. Ali differ on the

identifications of several regions, what is important to note is that Dr. Buddha Prakash has expressed above the view that the Uttarakuru-Varṣa comprised only Sinkiang. This impression appears to be due to the proximity of Sinkiang to the mid-Himalayan region, which became sacred in later times. We have to differ from this view as this amounts to making the whole equal to a small part. However, we would agree with him when he says that the whole expanse of land between the Himalayas and the Arctic regions was denoted by this term 'Uttarakuru' and that "beyond it was the dreary, dismal and frightful regions of snow, ocean, darkness and anroru borealis".[16]

Dr. Ali was an eminent geographer and most of his identifications are convincing. However, having restricted himself mainly to a study of the Puranas which were composed in later ages, he has been led into committing an unfortunate error of judgment. Having identified the regions in the northern direction of Meru which include Uttarakuru-Varṣa, he makes the following statement :

> "It is to be noted that none of the peaks of mountains, nor the summits of plateaus, nor high valleys in the vast region...have been particularised or sanctified by associating them with the residence of gods like Indra, Brahma, Narayana, Vishnu, Kesava, etc."[17]

The fact is that Uttarakuru-Varṣa has been looked upon as a sacred land from very early times. In *the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* we have the following reference to it :

> *Uttarasyām diśi ye ke cha pareṇa himavantam janpadāḥ uttarakuruvaḥ uttara madrāḥ iti vairājyāya te abhiṣichyante virāḍityanena abhiṣiktānāchakṣata.*
>
> "The Kings of Uttarakuru and Uttaramadra, the regions lying in the northern direction beyond the Himalayas, are consecrated for Vairāja and thus consecrated they are designated 'Virāṭa'."[18]

Then we have the story of the quarrel between king Jānaṁtapi Atyarāti and his priest Sātyahavya Vasiṣṭha.[19]

Sātyahavya performed the Indrābhiṣeka coronation ceremony of Jānaṁtapi and the latter conquered all the lands. But when Sātyahavya asked for his reward Jānaṁtapi said that he would pay him after he had conquered Uttarakuru. Thereupon the priest replied that Uttarakuru was the land of the gods and no human being could conquer it.

These two anecdotes indicate that Uttarakuru was inhabited by gods and that it lay in the northern direction beyond the Himalayas. The story of king Jānaṁtapi and Sātyahavya further shows that about the Brāhmaṇa period of the Vedic age the race of Devas had come to be regarded as invincible by the Indian priestly class but Aryan kings of India, like their predecessor Nahuṣa, still cherished the ambition of ascending the throne of Devaloka and ruling over the Devas.

The *Mahabharata* (*Ādi Parva*, Chapter 123) also refers to Uttarakuru in a long dialogue between Pandu and Kunti, the parents of the five Pandavas, in the course of which Pandu describes the amount of freedom enjoyed by the women of that land in their relations with men. Alluding to this dialogue in an article entitled 'The Hūṇa problem' Dr. S.K. Aiyangar rightly concluded that the inhabitants of Uttarakuru were 'quite an earthly people'.

Perhaps it is important to make it clear at this stage that when we claim that the Devas were a race of men and that they inhabited this earth on the Pamirs and the lands around it, we are not out to deny the existence of these heavenly beings. Our position is the same as the one taken up by C.V. Vaidya when he stated that some of the Vedic deities such as "Indra and Vishnu had both natural and historical origins."[20] In other words, there were both heavenly gods and earthly gods, the latter being men of flesh and blood. While describing the initiation of sacrifice at the commencement of *Tretā Yuga* the *Vāyu Purāṇa* refers to some of the Devas present on the occasion as 'Devas with sense-organs' (*indriyātmakāḥ devāḥ*)[21]. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also confirms this view when it says that "there are two kinds of gods, gods and

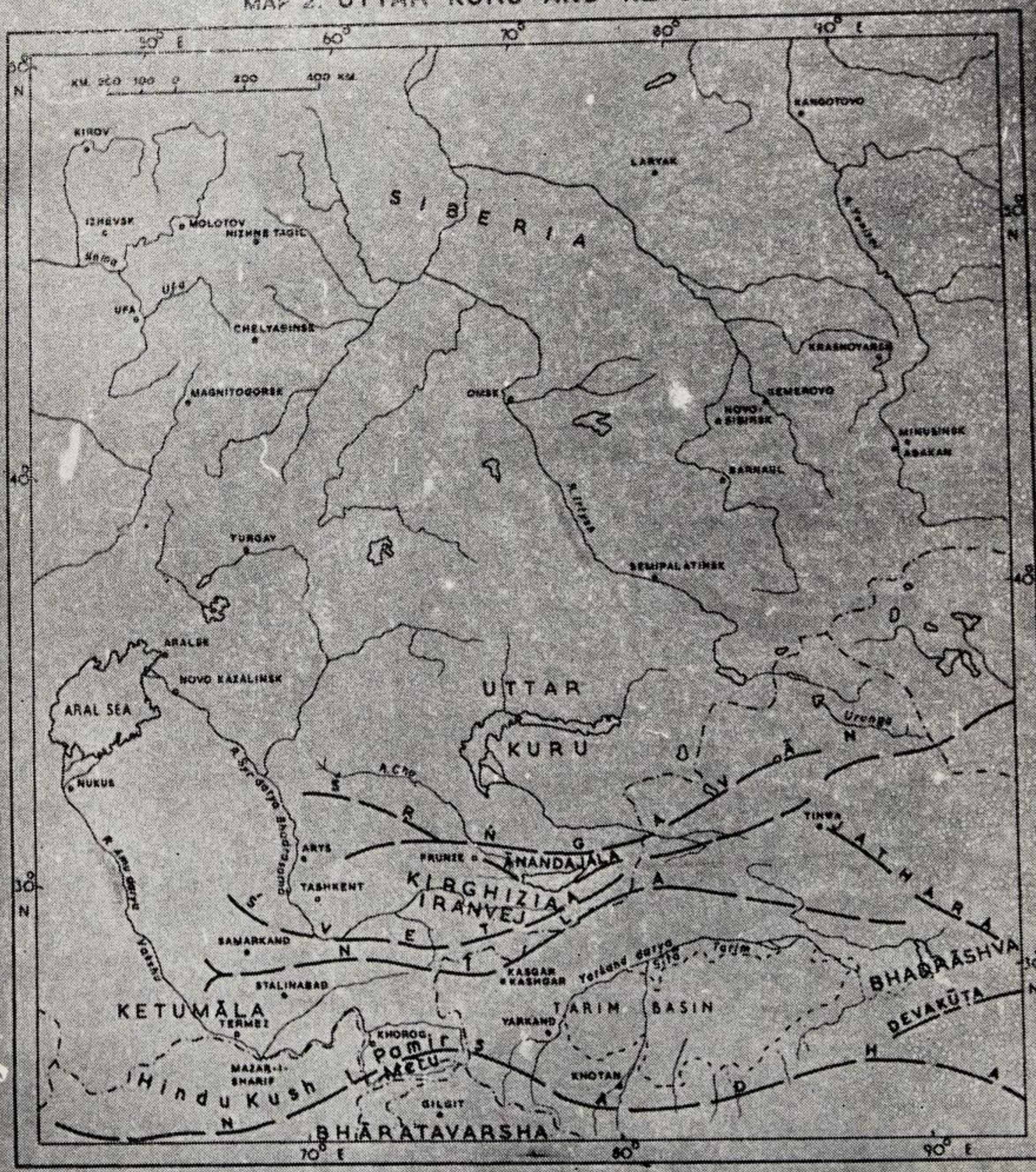
men-gods (*dvayā vai devā devā manuṣyadevāḥ*). Although this fact was gradually forgotten by the descendants of these men-gods yet it was too true to be completely ignored. Even in the 16th century A. D. Sāyaṇa commenting on the three gods called Ṛbhus had to admit that they were men and had attained godhood by practising austerities. V.M. Apte refers to the Rigvedic gods as follows :

"The gods are described as born, though not all simultaneously, and yet they are immortal. This immortality is either taken for granted or is a gift from Agni and Savitri, or is the result of the drinking of the Soma. In appearance they are human, the parts of their bodies (such as their arms or tongue) being identified poetically with the phenomena of nature, such as rays or flames. They travel through the air in cars drawn generally by steeds and occasionally by other animals. The food of men, such as milk, grain, and flesh, becomes the food of the gods when offered in the sacrifice, and is offered to them either on the grass kept ready for their reception at the place of the sacrifice or in the heaven where the god of fire carries it to them. The exhilarating juice of the Soma plant constituted the favourite drink of the gods."[22]

The picture drawn in the above extract cannot but leave the impression that the gods were looked upon by Indo-Aryans as their ancestors who had come to be deified later on.

It appears that Diva or Devaloka, the abode of the gods, had three separate regions as the Rigveda occasionally speaks of Tridiva. Basing his conclusions on the Rigveda, Rajaram Shastri names these three regions as Prasrauaṇa, Rochana and Samudra. As the gods themselves were of three classes *i.e.*, the Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas, he is of the view that each class may have had a separate region to itself. The fact that Indra has been called Vāsava and also included among Ādityas only goes to support the view expressed above that there were many Indras.

MAP 2. UTTAR KURU AND KETUMĀLA



Strangely enough, Rigvedic Tridiva or the three provinces of Devaloka appear to find confirmation in the geography of the vast tract lying to the south of Siberia and extending up to the plateau of the Pamir. This whole area was formerly called Russian Turkestan but now is divided into three socialist Soviet Republics of USSR named after their nationalities as Kirghiz, Uzbekistan and Turkemenistan, situated to the north and north-west of the plateau of Pamir (Meru) and which may have been the Rigvedic Prasravaṇa Rochana and Samudra respectively. Turkemenistan lies in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea and it may have been appropriately called Samudra. The Puranic names for Kirghizia and Uzbekistan (Samarkand region) are Supārśva and Ramaṇaka. The Puranic Supārśva is likely to have been the Vedic Prasravaṇa as according to the Vayu Purana the river Bhadrasome (Syr Darya) while passing through the Supārśva mountain throws water like garland which, according to Dr. Muzaffer Ali, is an apt description of Syr Darya, when it flows through Kirghizia. Similarly the name Ramaṇaka given by the Puranas to the Samarkand region in Uzbekistan, appears synonymous with Rochana and therefore the two may be accepted as identical regions.

Thus it would be seen that our Devaloka is not the Uttara Kuru, which extends up to the Arctic Ocean but only the southern part of it which is fed by the rivers which have their rise in the glaciers of the Pamirs. The region beyond the sea of Aral was considered unfit for the birth of any kind of cultural life. So far as the northern most parts are concerned, they consist of what have come to be known as Tundras "where only lichens and mosses could grow". Most of the Siberian plain "is largely covered in the north by a belt of temperate coniferous even up to the latitude of 55° N. . . . Within this forest belt human life could only depend upon hunting and food gathering....Below the forest belt of Siberia there is a small belt of temperate grassland and of black earth between latitude 55° N 50° N but the conditions of the

few rivers found in it are suitable again. They do not issue from great snow-covered mountain drains as the Pamirs or the Himalayas to ensure a perennial water supply. They lie largely within the permanently frozen subsoil, not good for agriculture all the year round." Further south lies the Caspian-Aral region extending from the valley of Syr Darya up to the plateau of Pamir. We may call it *South Uttarakuru*, the real Devaloka of the Puranas. M.B. Pithawalla describes the region in the following words :

> "The geographical conditions in prehistoric times must have been favourable to man in this basin, viz, good grass-land, good water supply, good food, animal transport, facilities for irrigation and agriculture, and the most important of all things, shelter and lower temperatures higher up the rivers, which flowed into this vast inland sea. Here Nature must have held man on trial, by putting hindrances in his path and progress, but when he tried to conquer nature in such conditions, evolution was assured and civilisation advanced as it could have advanced nowhere else."

It was thus the southern portion of Uttarakuru, particularly Kirghizia, Samarkand (Sogdiana of the Greeks) and Turkemenistan (with Merv as its principal town) which had fertile valleys and had contained settled population from times immemorial.

About Kirghizia, the Puranic Supārśva, Dr. Ali says that "these valleys have always formed a part of the most populated northernmost belt of Asia containing compact settlements including large and flourishing nodal towns where routes from the east, west and south converged".[24]

A modern British writer Fitzroy Maclean, who travelled through these parts during the last war, gives the following description :

> "On the fifth day we sighted the snow-clad mountains of Kirghizia which form the western extremity of the Tian-shan range. At the same time there was an abrupt change

in the nature of the country through which we were passing. We had left the Hungry Steppe and were in fertile, well-irrigated and cultivated country."[26]

We now turn to Samarkand or Sogdiana, the Puranic Ramaṇaka situated in the valley of Zarafshan, a tributary of the Oxus. Sogdiana was known as *Sughdha* to the Avestic writers. It is *Suguda* of the inscriptions of the kings of the Achemanian dynasty which have been written in Old Persian. After the invasion of Alexander the Great, the Greeks Hellenised it as Sogdiana with Samarkand as its capital. According to Nando Lal Dey[25] all the various forms of the word Sughdha have been derived from the Sanskrit name Śāka Dvīpa. He equates the river Zarafshan with Hiraṇyavati of the *Mahabharata* and with the Hāṭakī-Nadī of the *Bhagavata Purana*. Samarkand is situated on the western spur of the Alai Mountain which is merely an extension of Tianshan. The ancient city was called Maracanda, the ruins of which can be seen even to-day on the outskirts of Samarkand.

Maracanda became famous as the city of Afrasiab, the mighty Turanian ruler and the inveterate enemy of Iran. The city has been destroyed many a time but re-built again and again. In the medieval ages it became the capital of the empire of Timur and reached the peak of its magnificence during his reign. Dr. Ali describes the whole tract of Sogdiana in the following words :

"About 2500–2000 years before the present era Sogdiana and Bactria were already densely populated states. Their inhabitants carried on agriculture of a high level, were able to build extensive irrigation systems and were engaged in trade and handicrafts. It is said that Samarkand was founded in about 3000 B.C. Sogdiana can, therefore, be reckoned among the most ancient sites of human settlement."[27]

As regards the third region Turkemenistan, bordering on the Caspian sea, it is mentioned as Mouru in the *Avesta* and as Margu in the Achemanian inscriptions. The Greeks called

it Margiana. It is the well-known Merv, a famous city of the medieval ages. The town exists even now in the Soviet SSR of Turkemenistan. Nando Lal Dey identifies it with Sanskrit Mṛga which name, according to him, has survived in Murg-Ab, the river of Merv. The whole region of Margiana lies in a fertile oasis between the Karakum desert and the Kopet mountains. For ages Merv has served as a junction of routes for invading western Iran through Hecatomphybos and Ecbatana, and for entering south-eastern Iran and India via Herat and Seistan. It lay also on the trade route between China and Iran. The antiquity of Merv has been established by archaeological excavations conducted at Anau near Ashkabad, the latter now being the headquarters of the Soviet Republic of Turkemenistan.

Having thus made an attempt to identify the three divisions of Devaloka we must turn our attention towards the people who inhabited it. There is an interesting couplet in *Amarakoṣa* which runs as follows :

Vidyādharāpsaro Yakṣaḥ rakṣo gandharva Kinnarāḥ Piśācho guhyakaḥ siddho bhūtoamī devayonayaḥ. "The Vidyādhara, the Apsarā, the Yakṣa, the Gandharva, the Kinnara, the Piśācha, the Guhyaka, the Siddha and the Bhūta have the same origin as the Devas."

The word *devayonayaḥ* occurring in the couplet is significant. The commentator explains it to mean "partaking of the spirit of the Gods" (*devāṅśakāḥ*). In other words, these ten races enumerated in the couplet were not actually gods but had some godhood in them. To us it appears that living as they did in the midst of gods they got racially mixed up with them and thus came to be treated as having a common origin with gods. What has puzzled the scholars is the inclusion of the evil spirits such as the Rākṣasas and Bhūtas in this list. The only possible explanation is that the tribes who proved unfriendly to the Devas came to be regarded as evil spirits.

It is not surprising that the list of the *Amarakoṣa* which

is a late work does not mention the pitṛs and the Asuras. That these two were residents of Devaloka can be ascertained from other sources. As a matter of fact the *Bhagavata Purana* gives a clearer picture of Daivic creation (*devasarga*) with its eight-fold division[28] :

I Devas
II Pitarāḥ
III Asuras
IV Gandharvas and Apsarās
V Yakṣas and Rakṣasas
VI Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Vidyādharas
VII Bhūtas, Pretas and Piśāchas
VIII Kinnaras, Kimpuruṣas and Aśvamukhas

The Rigveda refers to '*Pañchajanāḥ*' or five people. Yāska, one of the earliest Vedic commentators, in his work *Nirukta*, refers to Gandharvas, Pitarāḥ, Devas, Asuras and Rākṣasas as the Vedic '*Pañchajanāḥ*'. As applied to the people residing in Devaloka Yāska seems to be correct but later on this expression was interpreted to mean peoples of India and thus came to signify other races.

Reserving discussion of pitarāḥ and Asuras for the next two chapters we would briefly notice some of the other inhabitants of Devaloka.

The Gandharvas and Apsarās were closely connected with the gods and appear to be their minstrels and dancers respectively. In the Epics and the Puranas they are shown as showering flowers on happy occasions. The Apsarās give the impression of being celestial courtezans. Their unearthly beauty attracted many Indo-Aryan kings but the relationship hardly seems to have been one of regular marriage. It is doubtful that they were the married women of even the Gandharvas with whom they were intimately associated. The Gandharvas themselves, apart from being divine minstrels seem to have been a powerful race as they are said to have ruled over some parts of India. Later on they came to be identified with the Gandharas or the people of Gandhara

situated on both sides of the Indus with its two capitals of Puṣkalāvatī and Takṣaśilā.

The Yakṣas were another powerful people, the males noted for their physical strength and the females for their beauty. Kubera was their ruler, reputed for his fabulous riches. As Ravana of Lanka was Kubera's step-brother the Yakṣas and the Rākṣasas seem to have been kindred people. We need not discuss the Rākṣasas as they are well known. However, the theory that they were cannibals has been questioned and therefore we may take note of what Nando Lal Dey has to say in this respect. Identifying the Rākṣasas with the Massageteo, a Scythian tribe, he quotes the following from Herodotus : "Human life does not come to its natural close with this people ; but when a man grows very old, all his kinsfold collect together and offer him up in sacrifice; offering at the same time some cattle also. After the sacrifice they boil the flesh and feast on it; and those who thus end their days are reckoned the happiest. If a man dies of disease they do not eat him, but bury him in the ground, bewailing his ill-fortune that he did not come to be sacrificed."[29]

Although the Puranas, particularly the Jaina works, often refer to Vidyādharas it is difficult to form a definite idea about them. Some writers treat them as jugglers but the Jaina writings would make us believe that they were quite a knowledgeable people.

The Siddhas and Chāraṇas also appear to be elusive. However, references in the Puranas lead us to believe that the Chāraṇas were the nomadic Aryans and the Siddhas constituted the settled Aryan people practising agriculture and various crafts.

The Bhūtas, Pretas and Piśāchas were human beings who later came to be considered goblins or evil spirits. The Piśāchas must have been an important people as their language Paiśāchī was once ranked among the literary Prākṛts of India. The Bhūtas have already been identified with the

ancestors of the Bhoṭas of Bhutan. The Kinnaras and Kimpuruṣas have been taken as effeminate races. So far as Aśvamukhas are concerned we find it difficult to distinguish them from the Kinnaras who are said to have had horse-like faces.

In historic times a large part of Uttarakuru came to be designated Śaka-dvīpa as the nomadic Aryans became known as the Śakas. The Iranians called them Turanians. Still later the Hūṇas, the Turks and Mongols occupied and ruled over it. When the Hūṇas became the rulers of this tract it became known as Rasātala. Its boundaries given by Nando Lal Dey show that it included the whole of southern Uttara-kuru or Devaloka.[30] India's connections with this territory which began in the dim past when it was inhabited by the Devas, continued century after century as every people who came to occupy it entered India as conquerors or immigrants.

In conclusion we have to emphasise what to us seems an indisputable fact, namely, that the population of Devaloka was not homogeneous even when it was the homeland of the Devas or the ancientmost Aryans. Perhaps all the racial types, which we find in Indian population in these days, excepting the negligible Negritos, were present in Deva-loka along with the Aryans. It would be perhaps a futile exercise to search for the Alpines, the Mediterraneans, and the Proto-Austroloids in the peoples of Devaloka. But we have no doubt that all these human types did exist in Devaloka. At any rate it is easy to recognise the Mongoloids in the Yakṣas who later on came to be known as Kirātas.

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Chapter
Two

Pitṛloka or
The home of the Indo-Iranians

IN THE FOREGOING chapter we have shown that the Devas could have been only a race of men, the forefathers of the Indo-Aryans and that the Devaloka was situated in the region of Meru comprising the vast tract extending from the river Oxus to the Arctic Ocean. It has also been suggested how under the leadership of several Indras, the rulers of Devaloka, Aryans must have spread out in various directions, a branch of them passing through eastern Iran and Afghanistan and ultimately reaching India.

So far we have relied upon ancient Indian traditions. We shall now examine ancient Iranian traditions. In the *Vendidad, Fargard I* of the *Zend-Avesta* we have a description of sixteen 'good lands' created by Ahura Mazda one after another. The names of these regions in order of creation are :

1. *Airyana Vaejo* 2. *Sughdha* 3. *Mouru* 4. *Bakhdhi*
5. *Nisaya* 6. *Haroyu* 7. *Vaekereta* 8. *Hrva* 9. *Khnenta*
10. *Harahvaiti* 11. *Haetumant* 12. *Ragha* 13. *Kakhra*
14. *Varena* 15. *Hapta Hendu* 16. *Rangha.*

As most of the regions in the above list have been identified and may often occur in the course of our studies we proceed to give brief notes on each of them. It should, however, be remembered that the Avestic names bear a somewhat different phonetic appearance in the old Persian, the language of the inscriptions of the kings of the Achaemenian dynasty. The Greeks who appeared on the political scene of Iran after the conquest of Alexander the Great, pronounced

them in their own way and thus further modified their names. Wherever possible, it would be rewarding to take note of all these changes. We might start with *Bakhdhi*, the fourth 'good land' created by *Ahura Mazda*. We have already discussed Nos. 2 and 3 *Sughdha* and *Mouru* in our previous chapters and we would like to reserve the discussion on No. 1 (*Iranvej*) to the end.

The region number 4 in the list is *Bakhdhi* or *Bakhtri* (Old Persian) or Bactria (Greek). It is the same as Iranian Balkh and Indian Vāhlīka. This region lying between the river Oxus and the Hindukush comprises a great part of the Puranic Ketumāla Varṣa. Unlike Samarkand and Merv the town of Bactria is situated on the southern side of the river Oxus. The Iranians call it the mother of cities, which may indicate that it was considered the oldest city of Iran. Like Merv this was also a place which served as a junction of routes for traders and invaders. Those invaders who wanted to enter North-Western Iran did so via Herat and those who preferred to penetrate into Punjab crossed the Hindukush and after seizing Kabul went across the Indus. The Greeks used the name Bactria for the city and Bactriana for the region of which it was the headquarters. The *Vendidad* designates Bactria as 'the city of banners'. Strangely enough, the name of the Puranic Varṣa in which it is situated, is also given as Ketumāla (a row of banners) which also has the same significance. This similarity would have remained a puzzle but for the light thrown on it by the Vāyu Purāṇa which describes an anecdote (in its 35th chapter) to the effect that during one of the Devasura wars Indra, having defeated the Asuras, took off his garland and hung it on a tree and that since this garland continued to remain there unfaded, the region (Varṣa) came to be called Ketumāla. If there is any substance in this fable it would suggest that the Aryans had once defeated the Asuras in the vicinity of Bactria and had taken possession of the city before crossing the Hindukush. This conclusion receives support from Nando Lal Dey who identifies the city

with Bali-Ālaya of the *Ramayana* (*Uttara-Kāṇḍa*, chapter 23) and Bali-Sadma of the *Amarakośa*. Both Bali-Ālaya and Bali-Sadma mean the same thing the Home of Bali, the famous Asura, who was the great-grandson of Hiraṇya Kashipu and grandson of Prahlāda. The story is well known how Bali was defeated by the Devas and forced to migrate to Pātāla.

Nisaya, the fifth in the list, has not yet been definitely identified. According to the location indicated in the *Vendidad* it lay between *Mouru* and *Bakhdhi* i.e., between Merv and Bactria. As no place corresponding to the name of *Nisaya* situated between Merv and Bactria has been discovered, we may treat this region as so far unexplained.

Haroyu or *Haraiva* (Old Persian) or *Areia* (Greek) is the region comprising the valley of the river Harirud. *Haroyu* corresponds to Indian Sarayu and this correspondence has met with unanimous approval of scholars. It is a fertile region famous for its fruits. The principal town is Herat, of great antiquity. It is a city of considerable strategic importance as "it lies on the junction of the routes, North to Merv and the USSR, East to Kabul, south-east to Kandahar, south to Seistan and West to Meshed, Isfahan and Karman". Alexander named it as the Alexandria of Ariana. If the Greek writer Pliny is to be believed, Ariana with its capital Herat was a part of the territory ceded by Seleucus Nikator to Chandragupta Maurya and continued to be in Mauryan possession up to the time of Ashoka.

According to Haug, Speigel and Pithawalla, *Vaekereta* of the *Vendidad* stands for Seistan, lying to the south of *Harirud*. Seitan is equivalent to Sanskrit Śakasthāna, so known as it was later on conquered and occupied by the Śakas or Scythians. Seistan is well known to readers of Firdousi's *Shahanama* as the home of Iranian heroes Kereshaspa, Nariman, Zal and Rustam.

James Darmestater, the translator of the *Vendidad*, identified Urva, the eighth 'good land', created by *Ahura Mazda* with 'Mesene, the region of the lower Euphrates'. J. J. Modi

and Pithawalla identify it with the valley of the Kabul river with which we agree. The ninth region *Khnenta* has been equated by Pithawalla with the Kandahar region. Both Kabul and Kandahar are too well known to need discussion.

Harahvaiti is the region through which the river Arghandab flows. It exactly corresponds to the Sanskrit word Sarasvati and we shall discuss it in greater detail while dealing with river Sarasvati. This region was known to the Greeks as Arachosia.

Haetumant or Etumandros (Greek) is equivalent to the Sanskrit word Setumanta, and is now known as Helmand. The chief town of this region is Ghazni. The name of the river *Haetumant* or Indian Setumanta is significant, as it had many dykes (*setu*) on its banks for irrigating the region.

The 12th region, *Ragha* or *Raga* (Old Persian) or *Ragai* (Greek) is Rae, now a suburb of Tehran. Legends ascribe great antiquity to this city. It is said to have been founded by Hoshang, the second king of the Peshdadian dynasty. It is definitely asserted that it is the birth place of the mother of Zoroaster or Zarathushtra, the prophet of Iran. Some even say that Zoroaster was born there and not in Azerbaijan.

Kakhra, according to B. G. Tilak, corresponds to Sanskrit Chakra. Pithawalla places this region in the Kura valley in Azerbaijan.

The fourteenth region in the list is *Varena* which has been variously located by scholars. Some have identified it with Gilan and some with Mt. Demavand. However, we agree with Dr. Mohamed Shahidullah who equates it with *Varena*, "modern Buner or that part of the North-Western frontier of India which lies between the Indus above Attock and the Pangkora which joins the Kabul river before it falls into the Indus at Attock". This region is important, as *Varena* is equated with the birth place of Thraetaona or the Vedic Tṛta, who, according to the Iranian tradition, killed Azi-Dahaka which corresponds to Vedic Ahi Dāsa or Asura Vṛtra.

The fifteenth 'good land' created by *Ahur-Mazda* is *Hapta*

Hindava which is Sanskrit Sapta Sindhu or the region of the Indus and its six tributaries.

The sixteenth 'good land' is *Rangha* which is the Vedic Rasā. Darmestater identified it with Tigris and some other scholars know it as Jaxtartes or Syr Darya which river Dr. Muzaffar Ali has equated with the Puranic Bhadrasoma. However, Syr Darya is too far off in the north from Hapta Hindava, the 15th 'good land'. Girish Chandra Awasthi in his Hindi work entitled *Veda Dharātala*[2] quotes three verses from Rigveda to prove that Rasā was considered to be a tributary of the Indus and identifies it with Śevakā which is a river of Kashmir and meets the Indus after Susartu and before Śvetyā. This equation is most plausible. By identifying Rangha or Vedic Rasā with the Kashmirian river Śevakā we do not deny that Jaxartes or Syr Darya was also called Rangha or Rasā. All that we mean is that the Vedic Rasā was Śevakā. Like the Iranian Sarasvati the Vedic Aryans may have brought the name from their original home and then applied it to an Indian river.

Some scholars regard the order of succession in the *Vendidad* list as representing "the actual order of the migrations and settlements of the old Iranian tribes" but others look upon it as "nothing more than a geographical description of Iran, seen from the religious point of view". However, James Darmestater has to admit that "there must have been some systematical idea in the order followed, though it is not apparent except in the succession of *Sughdha. Mouru, Bakhdhi, Haroyu, Vaekereta* (Nos. 2-7) which form one compact group of north-eastern provinces".[3] M.B. Pithawalla holds that the systematical idea in the order followed is apparent not only from 2 to 7 but up to the settlement No. 11 named *Haetumant*, as all the settlements up to *Haetumant* lay farther and farther to the south or south-east of Bactria. It is *Rae*, the twelfth settlement which was made in the north-west of Iran in the valley of Kura river. He explains this sudden swing to the north-west thus :

"The question naturally arises as to why this 12th Land happens to be so far removed from the 11th locality of the Helmand in modern Afghanistan. The answer is that after the last-named settlement, in which both the Persian Aryans and the Vedic Aryans lived together for the last time and the schism occurred due to the geographical as well as religious causes, the former chose to move eastwards towards the Iranian tableland while the latter travelled through the Khaiber Pass and arrived for the first time at the Indus, as there were hardly any habitable localities left towards the south and also there were no good rivers in Baluchistan due to inland drainage, for their settlement. This great event of separation took place about 1,500 B.C."[4]

This view of Pithawalla may be supported by what Ghirshman has to say about the entry of Aryans on the plateau Iran :

"It may be that during their passage through Bactria certain tribes thrust towards the west. Were they already capable of bringing to an end the occupation of the site of Hissar ? The difference of opinion concerning the date of the end of the latest settlement at this site—which, as excavations have shown, fell to a violent assault—leaves the question open. If it is dated to the middle of the second millennium, the cause of this destruction could be attributed to the movement of Indo-Europeans described above. If it is brought down to the last centuries of the same millennium, it may be that the cause was a new wave of Indo-Europeans, this time bringing the Iranians on to the plateau."[5]

In brief, we now feel that we are entitled to maintain that the Aryan tribes went on migrating towards the south and south-east till they had occupied the whole region extending from the Caspian sea to the Arabian sea comprising the whole of eastern Iran, Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Subsequently one section crossed the Indus and moved into India while

another entered the plateau of Iran either from Bactria or from Merv via Herat.

We must now turn to Iranvej or *Airyana Vaejo* that tops the list of lands in the *Vendidad*. The word 'Iranvej' means 'the seed of the Iranians'. In other words, the ancient Iranians looked upon Iranvej as their cradle land, as it was the first creation of *Ahura Mazda*. Where was this Iranvej, the Devaloka of the Iranians ? Darmestater agreed with those who, relying upon late Pehlavi records, attempted to locate the holy places of the ancient Iranians towards the western parts of Iran and placed Iranvej in Azerbaijan to the west of the Caspian. This trend of thinking has been reversed by a deeper study of ancient records and the availability of newer data. While Eduard Meyer points to the Pamir region, Ernst Herzfeld has the following to say in his book entitled *Iran in the Ancient East* :

> "From time immemorial, at least from the third millennium down to the middle of the second, the Aryans inhabited, as an undivided ethnical group, the vast plains of the Oxus and the Jaxtartes, the land *Eranvej* of the two rivers Vahvī-Datiyā and Ranhā."[6]

Pithawalla, in his thesis on the *Location of the Original Aryan Home and other Early Aryan Settlements*, after examining all aspects of the problem, reaches the conclusion that Iranvej lay in the valley of Syr Darya. We give below the summary of his arguments in his own words :

> "(1) the Syr Darya has fortunately retained the relic of the name Syr of Sur, originally found in the mythical Avestan river Ardui Sura, so highly praised in the Zoroastrian scriptures and remembered even in certain prayers of the Avesta. It was supposed to have flowed from the Hukere mountain into the Sea of Vourukasha, identified by such great scholars and pioneer geographical researchers as Sir Jivanji Modi, as the Elburz and the Caspian respectively. This is most probably the Original Aryan Home.

MAP 3 THE SIXTEEN GOOD LANDS

"(2) This valley is so close to the second best Land mentioned in the first Fargard of the *Vendidad*, viz. *Sughdha*, Sogdiana or the Amu Darya valley and the valley of the Zarafshan, also emerging from the same continuations of the mountains and falling into the same sea. The geographical conditions in both these valleys are similar.

"(3) Culture is generally born of the environment and these geographical conditions resemble, to some extent, the conditions mentioned in the *Vendidad*, the *Bundahishn* and other sacred books of the Parsees, sufficiently quoted in the body of the thesis, viz., good agricultural land, good water supply, good pasture, glaciers in the neighbouring mountains, glaciated condition of the rocks, dangers of floods, excessive silting up of the valley, hydrographical changes, peculiar plant and animal life, both wild and tamed, settlements protected from the onslaughts of un-Aryan tribes, and above all, the splendid landscape and appearance of the heavenly bodies in the clear sky which must have been greatly instrumental in developing the earliest religious notions of the Aryan race. So the environment was suitable for producing such a high civilisation.

"(4) Though this God-chosen Land now falls within the Steppe-Desert belt of Afrasia, it has played its part in producing such a high civilization many millenniums ago, when the climatic conditions were better. Today both the Atlantic storms and the S.W. monsoon belt do not reach this region as they used to do before. Even now there are excellent cases found within the region harbouring fortified towns as of old.

"(5) This valley of the Syr Darya is on the high caravan route even at present and it was quite central for all the offshoots from it. The Russian Railway now passes also through the valley.

"(6) Some Orientalists have identified the Aryan Home not very far from this valley, e.g., the Pamir by Max

Muller, some spot between the Syr and the Amu Darya by Baron Bunsen, and the lake Balkhash by Sirdesai; in fact it is the general opinion of several Orientalists that the original Aryan Home was somewhere in Central Asia. "(7) It is near Iran, which has still retained the ancient name Airyana in a slightly modified form and which has proved to be such a great power of civilization in the ancient and medieval times that the whole of the then known world was once brought under its sway. This country has retained its ancient traditions admirably, though it has seen many political upheavals and subsidences in later periods. Many of the cities, rivers, mountains, etc., mentioned in the Zend-Avesta can be identified with those lying on the Iran plateau to-day".[7]

In chapter I while discussing Uttarakuru, the land of the gods, we have already indicated that its northern part was inhabited by nomads and the southern part, comprising Kirghizia, Samarkand and Merv, was peopled by Aryans, who had taken to agriculture and other sedentary occupations. We have also observed that South Uttarakuru lay between Syr Darya and the plateau of Pamir. Viewed in the light of these, it would be easily comprehended that Iranvej lay in South Uttarakuru, whether with Meyer we place it in Pamir, or with Pithawalla in the valley of Syr Darya or with Herzfeld in the entire region between the Oxus and Syr Darya. As a matter of fact, Herzfeld's Iranvej will have to include not only Iranvej but also Soghdh (Samarkand) and probably Merv, numbers 2 and 3 in the Vendidad list. As Syr Darya in its upper course also flows through Kirghizia (Puranic Supārśva) it will also have to form a part of Iranvej as defined by Herzfeld.

It is noteworthy that all these three scholars have treated Iranvej as the cradle land not only of the Iranians but of the Indo-Europeans before their dispersal. The problem of the original Indo-European home has been discussed by a host of scholars from the days of Max Muller. The latest

conclusion, although by no means unanimous, has been admirably summed up by Dr. B.K. Ghosh in a few paragraphs. He writes :

"The new line of research opened up by Brandenstein is concerned chiefly with applied semsiology. He proceeds chiefly on the assumption that it is possible to draw definite conclusions about the cultural evolution of the primitive Indo-Europeans and their prehistoric seats of settlement from a study of the stocks of words they should have possessed at different stages, and also by examining the changes of meaning undergone by those words. Brandenstein shows first that Indo-Iranian reveals an older stage of semidialects put together, and from this he draws the reasonable conclusion that the Indo-Iranians were the earliest to separate from the main body of Indo-Europeans, and that the other tribes continued to live together for some time after their departure. Indo-Europeans of the period previous to the secession of the Indo-Iranians he calls 'Early Indo-European', and Indo-Europeans of the period posterior to that secession, 'Late Indo-European'. The Early Indo-European vocabulary, in Brandenstein's opinion, reveals a steppe land at the foot of a mountain range as the original home, which, he thinks, can be no other than the north-western Kirghiz steppe to the south of the Urals. As for Early Indo-European flora, there cannot be found the name of a single plant that is typically European, and the fauna of this period comprised mammals like the elk, wild boar, wolf, fox, bear, etc.

"The later Indo-European vocabulary, however, reveals quite a different land and quite different plants and animals. In the place of words associated with dry steppe-land, now crop up a number of vocables which clearly suggest swampy tracts, and now appears for the first time also the idea of bridges suggesting settled residence ; on the other hand, words denotative of fauna and

flora of this period point to the territory immediately to the east of the Carpathians. Brandenstein therefore concludes that the undivided Indo-Europeans lived originally in what is now the Kirghiz steppe, from where the Indo-Iranian tribes moved eastward, and the other tribes, at a later date, westward. The westward-moving tribes, however, were split up into two groups by the Rokytno swamps, so that some of them struck north to be differentiated later into Nordics, and others advanced into Ukraine and from there farther to the south and the west.

"It would be senseless to claim that every detail of the itinerary of the Indo-European tribes chalked out by Brandenstein is, or can be, correct. But it is significant that the results obtained by him applying his altogether new method should point to approximately the same locus as is indicated by the evidence of history, philology and archaeology."[8]

Thus we have to accept Kirghizia, at least tentatively, as the united home of the Indo-Europeans. However, we would not like to confine Kirghizia to the SSR of Kirghizia in the USSR. Kirghizia, as designated now, lies in the upper reaches of the Syr Darya. If we define Kirghizia as comprising the entire Syr Darya Valley any difference that now may exist between thc views of Brandenstein and Pithawalla would disappear. As regards the Indo-Iranians, who were the first to leave Kirghizia, we have already noted Herzfeld's conclusion that they were settled in the valleys of both the rivers Syr Darya and Oxus. In this connection the list of lands said to have been mythically created by Ahura Mazda can help us with some specific clues. After his first creation i.e. Iranvej (Kirghizia) Ahura Mazda is stated to have successively created three other lands which we have identified with Samarkand, Merv and Bactria. This shows that, having moved from the valley of Syr Darya or Kirghizia the joint branch of Indo-Iranian Aryans first occupied the region

comprising the Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and then turned south-east to Bactria. Most of the *Vendidad* regions mentioned after Bactria seem to suggest clearly that the Indo-Iranians gradually extended their settlements and ultimately came to occupy eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and also a part of northern India up to the valleys of Sarasvatí and Dṛśadvatī.

Thus both the Indian and Iranian traditions leave us in no doubt that the area adjacent to and watered by rivers emanating from the snowy glaciers of the Pamirs was the original home of Indo-Europeans But in this chapter we are more concerned with the Indo-Iranians than with the Indo-Europeans. The Europeans have bequeathed no ancient tradition comparable to Iranians and Indians and we have to depend on philology alone to establish their affinity with the ancient Aryans. The relationship between ancient Indian and Iranian Aryans, however, was so close that it amounted to ethnic and cultural identity.

About the linguistic affinity of the two peoples Dr. P. Giles makes the following comments :

> "The dialects of Iran, the language of the earliest later dialect of the other surviving parts of the sacred Gathas (Songs) which are attributed to Zoroaster himself, the literature of the ancient Persians—the Avesta and the inscriptions beginning with Darius I about 520 B.C. and best represented in his time but continuing to the last Darius in 338 B. C., are all closely related to the oldest dialect discovered in India which appears in the hymns of Rigveda. Not only single words and phrases, but even whole stanzas may be transliterated from the dialect of India into the dialect of Iran without change of vocabulary or construction, though the appearance of the words is altered by the change which time and isolation have brought about in the dialects east and west of Afghanistan."[9]

As regards the religious ideas, gods and angels, creation-myths and even rituals, so much is common that it has been

even remarked that "the *Avesta* and the Veda are two echoes of one and the same voice, the reflex of one and the same thought". What is surprising is that although the *Avesta*, as found to-day, embodies the reform brought about by Zarathustra, the prophet of Iran, it continues to show beneath the thin veil the old religion of the joint Indo-Iranian people.

As Dr. B. K. Ghosh has rightly observed, "Zarathustra's position is more or less analogous to that of the Buddha in India". He further observes :

"It is clear that the ritual practices against which Zarathustra directed his homilies closely resembled those of the Vedas. A large number of common cult-words such as *haoma (soma)*, *zaotar (=hotā)*, *athravan (=atharvan)*, *manthra (=mantra)*, *yazata (=yajata)*, *yasna (=yajña)*, *azuiti (=āhuti)*, etc. and also the whole sacrificial cult, leave no doubt that Vedic and Avestan rituals are of one and the same origin. Evidently, the Zarathustrian reform could not materially alter the essentially Vedic character of the Soma cult cherished in Iran from ages before his time.

"In the field of religion and mythology, however, Zarathustra was more successful. But here, too, the points of similarity are striking enough to prove previous identity. The ceremony of *Upanayana* is practically the same in the *Veda* and the *Avesta*, and in both the conventional number of gods is the same, namely thirty-three. Both in the *Veda* and the *Avesta* the picture of the gods is primarily that of an heroic Aryan warrior riding in a chariot drawn by powerful steeds. Like the Vedic gods those of the *Avesta* too hold up the sky to prevent its falling down, and image worship is equally unknown in the *Avesta* and the *Veda*. Varuṇa, like his Avestan opposite number Ahura, assisted by Mitra (Avestan Mithra), is the supreme guardian of moral law, and the conception of cosmic order is represented in both by the same abstract deity,

the Vedic Ṛta-Avestan Aśva. Even the notorious discrepancy between the Vedic and Avestan Indra will disappear if the history of this god, as reconstructed by Beveniste and Renou, is kept in view. Their ingenious theory may be summarized as follows : In the Indo-Iranian epoch there were two different gods, Indra and Vṛtrahan (*Vṛtra*—resistance, Vṛtrahan=resistance-breaker). Indra was nothing but a concrete personalization of mere physical prowess, known in the legends of most primitive civilizations, but he was too *Daivic* to suit the taste of the stern reformer Zarathustra who did not hesitate to send him to Hades. But the Lord Resistance-breaker, i.e. Vrioragna, whose function it was to break the resistance put up by evil, continued his glorious career within the Iranian pantheon. Indra and Vṛtrahan were united in the same person only later in the Vedic age. In short, Vedic Indra is the Indo-Iranian Indra (mentioned at Boghaz-Koi) *plus* Vṛtrahan, whereas Avestan Indra is the Indo-Iranian Indra *minus* Vṛtrahan. There is no discrepancy, therefore, between Vedic Indra and Avestan Indra if it is remembered that the history of Indra is in reality the history of two different gods who influenced each other in two different ways in Iran and India."[10]

Dr. Ghosh concludes as follows :

"So long as it was believed that the Gāthās, because oldest in language, give also the oldest picture of the Aryan civilization of Iran, it was by no means possible to see that the society described in the Veda and the Avesta is essentially the same. But it has not been fully established that the civilization of the Gāthās is a later reformed civilization of Iran, of which a much older phase is reflected in the Yašts, particularly the so-called heathenish Yašts, i.e. the Yašts which have suffered least from Zarathustrian revision. And the culture reflected in these pre-Zarathustrian heathenish Yašts is essentially that of Vedic India. The very Haoma-cult, which is rightly regard-

ed as the chief indicator of Indo-Iranian cultural unity, is not only pre-Zarathustrian but definitely anti-Zarathustrian, and could be retained in the post-Zarathustrian religion of Iran only because the prophet—clearly out of policy—did not specifically mention Soma in prohibiting intoxicating drinks: from this omission it was argued by Avestan theologians that all other intoxicants are impure, but not Haoma. Benveniste has demonstrated that the Persian religion of the Achaemenian age, as described by Herodotus, agrees not at all well with that of the Gāthās, but shows significant points of similarity with the Vedic religion."[11]

All that we have discussed so far is only by way of introduction to our main subject which forms the title of this chapter : Pitṛloka or Ancestral Home. In view of the fact that the ancient Indians and Iranians were a kindred people with a common home, it is natural to expect that they must have had also some common ancestors. As a matter of fact, there is a tradition of common ancestry both in India and Iran.

Let us first examine the Indian tradition. In the very beginning of the first chapter we have shown, on the authority of the Rigveda, that Indra after overthrowing the armies of the black Dasyus granted land to Manu. That he was the first Aryan leader to conquer the Dāsas and to rule over part of India is confirmed by the statement of Bhāradvāja who says that "god Agni raised Manu above the Dāsas" (*RV*. 6, 21, 11.). Besides, in hymn after hymn of the Rigveda (as for examples *RV*. 1, 14, 2; 2, 33, 13) Manu is remembered as father. Ṛṣi Dyuvasyu Vādana in the 10th *maṇḍala* (*RV*. 10, 100, 5) even calls him 'our father'.

It is evident from the foregoing references that the Aryans of India traced their descent from Manu. In order to distinguish him from other Manus the Vedic literature gives his name as Manu Vaivasvata.

This literature and the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas

connect him with the story of the Flood which is also mentioned in the Biblical, Chaldean and Iranian records. So far as India is concerned, the oldest version is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which runs as follows :

"One morning water was brought to Manu for him to wash in, just as to-day water is brought for the washing of hands. As he washed, a fish came into his hands. The fish spoke to him : Save me, I shall save thee. From what will you save me ? A deluge (*aughaḥ*) will engulf all the creatures : It is from that I shall save thee. How shall I save you ? The fish said : When we are small, there are many dangers of death for us, fish eats fish. You must therefore keep me in a pot; then, when I am very big, take me to the sea; by then I shall have escaped the danger of death. In such and such a year, a deluge will come: prepare a ship (*nāvaṁ*) and wait for me. And when the flood rises, get into the ship and I shall save thee. Manu saved the fish, and then took it to the sea. In the year which he had prophesied, Manu built a ship and kept watch; when the flood rose, he embarked on the ship. The fish came; he fixed to his horn the rope of the ship and took it thus to the northern mountain. Then he said to him: this is how I have saved thee; tie thy ship to a tree, but take care that thou art not cut off by the water while thou art on the mountain. As the water retires thou shalt descend. As it retired, he descended. The northern mountain is thus called 'the descent of Manu' *manoravasarpaṇaṁ*. Now the deluge carried off all creatures, and Manu remained alone on earth."[12]

The *Mahabharata* version adds that seven Ṛṣis (*saptarshis*) were saved along with Manu and that after having saved them the fish assumed the form of Prajapati Brahma and instructed Manu to re-people the world. This story of the Flood goes to show that Manu was the primeval ancestor of the Indian Aryans, and justifies the title of 'our father' so lovingly bestowed upon him by the Vedic Rishis. Manu Vaivasvata's

name is proclaimed to us on every occasion of a religious undertaking, or *samkalpa* by the priests, who remind us that we are still living in the aeon of Vaivasvata (*vaivasvata manvantare*).

We learn from the Puranas that Manu Vaivasvata was preceded by six other Manus, all of them belonging to the pre-flood period. It appears from the Puranic accounts that all these previous Manus belonged to one and the same family as they had directly descended from the first Manu named Manu Svāyaṁbhuva. Our Manu was connected with the sixth Manu through the latter's daughter, who is said to have been his mother.

Manu had ten sons and a daughter Ilā. From his eldest son Ikṣvāku sprung the Solar dynasty of kings, and through his daughter Ilā, who married Budha, the son of Soma, the Lunar dynasty came into existence. All the other ruling families of ancient India having been merely branches and sub-branches of these two original dynasties, it can be rightly claimed for Manu that he was the progenitor of the entire old ruling class of proto-historic India.

But what is of more importance to us in the present context is the tradition that this Manu had a brother named Yama and sister named Yamī who also figure in the hymns of the Rigveda, and in the pages of Purāṇas. We have already seen that Manu was a king but a question naturally arises whether Yama was also a ruler of some territory. The answer is given by the *Yajur Maitrāyaṇīya Samhitā* (1,6,32) which says that "Manu and Yama were the sons of Vivasvān; Manu ruled in this region and Yama in the other". ("*Sa pāva vivasvānādityo yasya manuścha. Manurevāsminlôke yamômusmin*. The meaning of the words, 'in the other' becomes clear when we examine the following reference in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (13/4/3/6) :

Yamo vaivasvato rājetyāha tasya pitaro viśaḥ. "Yama, the son of Vivasvata has been called a king. The Pitṛs (ancestors) are his subjects."

This is confirmed by the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (Chapter 70) which says that "Yama, the son of Vivasvata, was crowned to rule over the kingdom of the Pitṛs".

Vaivasvatam pitṛṇām cha yamam rājye abhyase cha yat.

All these references make it clear that Yama, too, like his brother Manu, was a ruler and that he was the king of the Pitṛloka.

Where then was this Pitṛloka ? Was it situated in the nether regions where the Indo-Aryans were supposed to reside after their career on this earth had ended ? This is the prevalent view. As the Devaloka was lifted up from the earth and placed above in the heavens, similarly in the later times Pitṛloka was pressed down and consigned to the supposed nether regions of the dead. We have attempted to show in the first chapter that the Devaloka existed on this earth. We shall now examine the Iranian tradition to show that Pitṛloka was also situated not below but above on this solid earth.

We shall begin with a rather long quotation from *Fargard* II of the *Vendidad* included in the *Zend-Avesta*. Conversing with Zarathustra, the prophet of Iran, Ahura Mazda says :

"The fair Yima, the good shepherd, O holy Zarathustra! he was the mortal, before thee, Zarathustra, with whom I, Ahura Mazda, did converse, whom I taught the Religion of Ahura, the Religion of Zarathustra. 3 (7) Unto him, O Zarathustra, I, Ahura Mazda, spake saying : 'Well, fair Yima, son of Vivanghat, be thou the preacher and the bearer of my Religion!'"

"And the fair Yima, O Zarathustra, replied unto me, saying :

'I was not born, I was not taught to be the preacher and the bearer of thy Religion.'

4 (11) Then I, Ahura Mazda, said thus unto him : O Zarathustra :

'Since thou dost not consent to be the preacher and the bearer of my Religion, then make thou my world increase, make my world grow : consent thou to nourish, to rule,

and to watch over my world.'
5 (14) And the fair Yima replied unto me, O Zarathustra, saying :
'Yes' I will make thy world increase, I will make thy world grow. Yes ! I will nourish, and rule, and watch over thy world. There shall be, while I am king, neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither disease nor death.'
7 (17) Then I, Ahura Mazda, brought two implements unto him : a golden seal and a poniard inlaid with gold. Behold, here Yima bears the royal sway !
9 (20) Thus, under the sway of Yima, three hundred winters passed away, and the earth was replenished with flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red blazing fires, and there was room no more for flocks, herds, and men.
9—Then I warned the fair Yima, saying. 'O fair Yima, son of Vivanghat, the earth has become full of flocks and herds, of men and dogs and birds and of red blazing fires, and there is room no more for flocks, herds, and men.'
10—Then Yima stepped forward, in light, southwards, on the way of the sun, and (afterwards) he pressed the earth with the golden seal, and bored it with the poniard, speaking thus :
'O Spenta Ârmaiti, kindly open asunder and stretch thyself after, to bear flocks and herds and men.'
11—And Yima made the earth grow larger by one-third than it was before, and there came flocks and herds and men, at their will and wish, as many as he wished.
12 (23)—Thus, under the sway of Yima, six hundred winters passed away, and the earth was replenished with flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red blazing fires, and there was room no more for flocks, herds, and men.
13—And I warned the fair Yima, saying : 'O fair Yima, son of Vivanghat, the earth has become full of flocks and herds, of men and dogs and birds and of red blazing

fires and there is room no more for flocks, herds, and men.'

14—Then Yima stepped forward, in light, southwards, on the way of the sun, and (afterwards) he pressed the earth with the golden seal, and bored it with the poniard, speaking thus :

'O Spenta Ârmaiti, kindly open asunder and stretch thyself after, to bear flocks and herds and men.'

15—And Yima made the earth grow larger by two-thirds than it was before, and there came flocks and herds and men, at their will and wish, as many as he wished.

16—(26) Thus, under the sway of Yima, nine hundred winters passed away, and the earth was replenished with flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red blazing fires, and there was room no more for flocks, herds, and men.

18 (31) Then Yima stepped forward, in light, southwards, on the way of the sun, and (afterwards) he pressed the earth with the golden seal, and bored it with the poniard, speaking thus :

'O Spenta Ârmaiti, kindly open asunder and stretch thyself afar, to bear flocks and herds and men.'

19 (37) And Yima made the earth grow larger by three-thirds than it was before, and there came flocks and herds and men, at their will and wish, as many as he wished."[13]

The Vendidad immediately follows this up with the story of the flood in which Yima, under the instruction of Ahura Mazda, plays the part of the rescuer of his people. To avoid a longer quotation, we give below only the first part of the story :—

"The maker, Ahura Mazda, called together a meeting of the celestial Yazatas in the Airyana Vaego of high renown, by the Vanguhi Dâitya.

The fair Yima, the good shepherd, called together a meeting of the best of the mortals, in the Airyana Vaego of high renown, by the Vanguhi Dâitya.

To that meeting came Ahura Mazda, in the Airyana Vâegô of high renown, by the Vanguhi Dâitya; he came together with the celestial yazatas.

To that meeting came the fair Yima, the good Shepherd, in the Airyana Vâegô of high renown, by the Vanguhi Dâitya; he came together with the best of the mortals.

22 (46) And Ahura Mazda spake unto Yima, saying :

'O fair Yima, son of Vivanghat! Upon the material world the evil winters are about to fall, that shall bring the fierce, deadly frost; upon the material world the evil winters are about to fall, that shall make snow-flakes fall thick, even an aredvî deep on the highest tops of mountains.

23 (52) 'And the beasts that live in the wilderness, those that live on the tops of the mountains, and those that live in the bosom of the dale shall take shelter in underground abodes.

24 (57) 'Before that winter, the country would bear plenty of grass for cattle, before the waters had flooded it. Now after the melting of the snow, O Yima, a place wherein the footprint of a sheep may be seen will be a wonder in the world.

25 (61) 'Therefore make thee a Vara, long as a riding-ground on every side of the square, and thither bring the seeds of sheep and oxen, of men, of dogs, of birds and of red blazing fires."[14]

We think the following seven conclusions can be reasonably drawn from the above two quotations from the Vendidad :

(1) That Yima, son of Vivanghat, is identical with Yama, the son of Vivasvata.

(2) That Yima was made the ruler by Ahura Mazda and his subjects were human beings.

(3) That he was the ruler of some country not far off from the Vanguhi Daitya, or the river Oxus where the meeting arranged by Ahura Mazda took place.

(4) That before the onset of the flood he had enlarged

the territories of his kingdom thrice as they were getting increasingly over-populated.

(5) That this enlargement of his kingdom was towards the southern direction.

(6) That the flood in this story was not different from those mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and Biblical and Chaldean traditions except that while other stories do not mention the cause of the flood the *Vendidad* says that it was caused by winter and snow.

(7) And that while Manu resorted to a ship to save humanity Yima constructed a Vara or enclosure to protect his people.

Let us now examine each conclusion and see if it is possible to find further evidence in support of them.

(1) As regards the first conclusion we need not adduce evidence as the identity of the Iranian Yima with Vedic Yama has been accepted by every scholar. We shall content ourselves with a quotation from F.C. Davar :

"Vivangahān's son Yimaksheta (Jamshid) has been identified by scholars with the Vedic Yama, son of Vivaswān. Not only are the Yama of the Vedas and Yima (Jamshid) of Avesta similar, but in fact they are actually identical. Their fathers' names are the same : each had a sister named Yami. Jamshid had saved Iran presumably during the glacial epoch from a calamitous deluge of snow. According to Hindu legend it was a watery deluge that submerged the land in the days of Manu, the brother of Yama, and it was Manu who was the national saviour. Jamshid is regarded as the father of Iranian civilization, while Manu, the brother of Yama, is respected as one of the foremost founders of Hindu race and religion. It was the misfortune of Jamshid to lay claim to divinity, while Yama, who was the first to suffer death among human mortals, was regarded as the God of death by Hindus. According to the Ṛgveda 10.14.11, Yama in the next world is accompanied by two dogs with four eyes

each; according to the Avesta also the frontiers of the celestial world are guarded by four-eyed dogs. It is not astonishing that Jamshid and Yama should be identical though mentioned in different scriptures, for we come across similar parallels between several other heroes in Vedic and Avestan literatures."[15]

(2) As regards Yama being a ruler we have already produced evidence from the Indian literature. Extracts from the *Vendidad* given above show that Yima was made a ruler by Ahura Mazda after he had humbly declined the prophethood of the Mazdian creed. The Indian tradition says that Yama ruled over the Pitṛs. If any doubt remains that the Pitṛs were human beings and Yima's subjects it should be removed by the Iranian tradition of the *Vendidad* that Yima attended the meeting convened by Ahura Mazda in the company of mortals.

(3) As the meeting arranged by Ahura Mazda took place on Vanguhi Daitya which is no other than Oxus, the head-quarters of Yima's enlarged realm could not have been very far from this river. Herzfeld in an article in the Dr. Modi Memorial Volume has furnished evidence for locating the capital of Yima in Khvarizm. Quoting a passage from Iranian *Bundehishna* he translates it as follows:

> "Under the reign of Yima (Jamashid) the Adhur Varreh (fire) was established on the XVARNAHWANT KOH (The glorious mountain) in Khvarizm."

We feel that in the absence of any other evidence Herzfeld's conclusion should be accepted. The Iranians, like the Indo-Aryans, were fire-worshippers and as Yima could not have installed the sacred fire far from his capital, we have no hesitation in placing Yima's home and, therefore, also that of Manu in Khvarizm. Khvarizm is modern Khiva situated some 25 miles from the left bank of the Oxus (Amu Darya) in a fertile oasis and now forming the West Department of the Uzbek, Soviet Socialist Republic with the ancient name Khvarizm.

(4) As Iranvej got over-populated, Yima, as directed by Ahura Mazda, enlarged his territories thrice. As Sogdiana, Margiana and Bactriana were the three 'good-Lands' which were created by Ahura Mazda in the valleys of Zarafshan, Murghab and Amu Darya successively. Yima now became the ruler of Samarkand, Merv and Balkh with his capital at Khvarizm or Khiva.

(5) The *Vendidad*, as quoted above, says that every new settlement was to the south of the previous settlement. This is possible only if, as suggested by us, we place Iranvej in the Syr Darya valley as suggested by Pithawalla and enlarge Herzfeld's ancient Kirghizia to include the lower reaches up this river up to the sea of Aral.

Yima's three movements to the south to form new Aryan settlements as mentioned in the Iranian tradition become significant if we keep in mind the Indian tradition which makes Yama, the lord of the southern direction. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11.3.2. 1.2.) occurs the following :

Etā ha vai devatā yoasti tasmin vasantīndro yamo rājā naḍo naiṣidhoanaśnantsāṁgamanosampāṁasavaḥ. Tad-dāaeṣa evendraḥ. Yadāhavanīyoathaiṣa eva gārhapatyo yamo rājāthaiṣa eva naḍo naiṣidho yadanvāhārthapachanas-tadyadeta maharahardakṣiṇata āharanti tasmādāūharaha-rvai naḍo naiṣidho yamam rājānam dakṣinata upanayatīti.

Kshetresh Chandra Chattopadhyaya translates this passage thus :

"These are indeed gods, who dwell in (the house of) the Yajamāna, viz, Indra, King Yama, Naḍa Naiṣidha, Anaśnant Sāṁgamana and Asant Pāṁsava. Now, the Āhav-anīya fire is Indra, the Gārhapatya fire is King Yama and the Dakshina fire is Naḍa Naiṣidha—that every day they carry fire to the south for him (i.e., for Dakshinagni =Naḍa Naiṣidha), it is for this that people, say 'Every day Naḍa Naiṣidha leads King Yama to the South.' "[16]

Commenting on the passage, Chattopadhyaya has remarked that "here Naḍa Naiṣidha is most expressly called a god

like Indra and Yama" and adds that "the meaning of the last sentence, referring to his leading Yama to the south every day, is not clear".[17] It is apparent that this reference to Yama being led to the south by *Naḍa Naiṣidha or Dakshin-agni* or southern fire can become clear only when we read it in the light of the passage we have quoted from the *Vendidad*. In the life of a people there is hardly any event more important than their being obliged to leave their original home. It is bound to stick to the memory of the race and is sometimes dramatised for being passed on to subsequent generations. As regards the allusion to the sacred fire leading Yama from Iranvej to the three new settlements concerned, it should cause no surprise as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* tells us that Videgha Māthava was led by the sacrificial fire from the banks of the Sarasvatī in Kurukṣetra to the river Sadānīrā when he colonised Videha.

(6) It is true that the Flood as found mentioned in Biblical, Chaldean, Indian and Iranian traditions, was treated at first as a myth by the scholars. However, archaeology, which has turned many accepted facts into myths has in this case turned a myth into a fact. In regard to the Chaldean tradition Leonard Wooley, who excavated the site of the ancient city of UR, states that he discovered unmistakable signs of the Flood "great enough to account for the eight-foot bank of clay". By now more sites have been excavated. Examining the latest evidence, Samuel Noah Kramer states that "the Mesopotamian flood-story, and the Old Testament version based on it, were inspired by an actual catastrophic but by no means universal disaster that took place, not as Wooley claimed, immediately after the Ubaid period, but some time about 3000 B.C. and that it left its archaeological traces in Kish, Shuruppak and probably at a good many other places yet to be discovered".[18]

(7) As regards Yima's '*Vara*' or enclosure, which he constructed to save his people from the Flood, it too was looked upon as a figment of imagination of the Iranian myth-

makers. However, archaeology has again come to the aid of these so-called myth-makers and turned a legend into a fact of history. Writes D.D. Kosambi :

> "Rectangular enclosures discovered by Soviet archaeologists in Uzbekistan have the exact traditional dimensions of the '*Var*' of Yima in Iranian religious books. The pre-historic builders lived in small rooms in the stone walls while the cattle were penned in the central open space in times of trouble. Yima and his protected domain was pre-historic reality before the great Indo-Aryan migration."[19]

Thus in the light of all available evidence based on the *Vendidad*, Yama was clearly one of the Pitṛs of the Indo-Aryans as of the Iranians and Pitṛloka was the realm over which Yima ruled as its king. Its territory extended from the sea of Aral in the north to the city of Bactria in the south of the Oxus with its capital at Khvarizm (Khiva) or somewhere near it. What is noteworthy is that the region of Pitṛloka, as defined, becomes almost identical with the south of Uttarakuru or Devaloka (as discussed in the first chapter). This should cause no surprise as the Pitṛs have also been included in the *Devasarga* or divine creation.

The Pitṛs were called *Fravashis* by the Iranians. F.C. Davar says :

> "Both the *Fravashis* and the Pitris are invoked for help and protection during life ; both dwell in the highest heaven ; both can be invoked individually or collectively. Both are worshipped with water, fruits and cakes ; but among the Zarathushtrians in larger ages various viands were offered with a view either to securing a higher position for the dead in the next world, or brighter terrestrial prospects for the survivors through the good offices of the departed. The last ten days, known as the *Fravardgān* or *Muktād*, of the Zarathushtrian calendar are specially set apart for the worship of the dead : the number of days has however been extended to eighteen by priestly

legislation. The last day for the worship of the dead is known among the Zarathushtrians as the *Gāthā Vahishtāishti*, and among the Hindus as the *Sarvapitri Amavasya*, and both people regard those days with particular sanctity. The last fortnight of the eleventh Hindu month Bhādrapada is meant for the *shraddha* ceremony of the dead, which bears a striking resemblance to the Zarathushtrian ritual in the prayers chanted, the spirits invoked, the boons desired and the offerings presented on the occasion."[20]

Basing his account on some of the Purāṇas, F.E. Pargiter says about the Pitṛs :

"There were various classes of Pitṛs, of different origins, forms, grades and abodes. One broad distinction is into Pitṛs who were divine and Pitṛs who were deceased men. Also some dwelt in heaven and some in the underworld. The former who dwelt in heaven were as gods, and they and the gods were reciprocally gods and pitṛs. They were the most primeval deities, and were indeed from everlasting, and never cease to exist. But the Pitṛs who were human ancestors (comprising the father, grandfather and great grandfather) attained to and became one with the divine Pitṛs through righteousness and dwelt blissfully in heaven with them. At the end of every thousand yugas they are reborn, they revive the worlds, and from them are produced all the Manus and all progeny at the new creations."

"There Puranas thus declare that the *manuṣya pitṛs* attain to the same condition and position as the divine Pitṛs; dwell in heaven and reproduce the world in the next creation—that is, they are the 'seed' which generates fresh life in the next creation."[21]

The broad distinction made by Pargiter between divine Pitṛs (davāḥ pitaraḥ) and deceased Pitṛs (*manuṣyáḥ pitaraḥ*) needs a few words of explanation. The divine pitṛs should be taken to be those who were residents of Devaloka before

the Aryans left for India. As centuries passed, these were deified and the belief grew among the Aryans of India that by living a righteous life it was possible for one to be united after death with them. The well-known story of the last journey of the Pandavas to Devaloka springs from this belief. Yudhishthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, reached it alive and there met his wife and four brothers who had died on the way. The word *manuṣyāḥ* in the compound *manuṣyāḥ pitaraḥ* should be taken to mean that the Indo-Aryans who had migrated to India looked upon themselves as the descendants of Manu.

The Purāṇas speak also of the *Pitṛkanyās*. Puzzled by the traditional description about them, Pargiter states :

> "Another instance is the curious Pitṛ-vaṁśa. The seven classes of Pitṛs had each one mind-born daughter (mānasī -kanyā), namely, Menā, Acchodā (Satyavatī), Pīvarī, Go, Yashoda, Viraja and Narmada. The account (subject to minor variations) stands thus. Menā was wife of Mount Himavant. They had a son Mount Maināka and three daughters, Aparna, Ekaparṇa and Ekapāṭala. Aparna became the goddess Uma ; Ekaparṇā married the rishi Asita and had a son, the rishi Devala ; and Ekapāṭala married Śatasilāka's son, the rishi Jaigīṣavya, and had two sons, Śaṅkha and Likhita. Acchodā, the river, for the sin of defying the Pitṛs, was born as a low-caste maiden (*dāseyī*) from king Vasu of Cedi and a fish who was the apsara Adrikā ; and she became (Kālī) Satyavatī, who was mother of Vyāsa by Parāśara, and of Vicitravīrya and Citrāṅgada by king Shantanu. Pīvari was wife of Vyāsa's son Śuka, and had five sons and a daughter Kīrtimatī who was Aṇuha's queen and Brahmadatta's mother. Go, called also Ekaśṛṅga, married the great rishi Śukra and was ancestress of the Bhṛgus. Yashoda was wife of Viśvamahat, daughter-in-law of Vṛddhaśarman, and mother of Dilīpa II Khaṭvāṅga. Viraja was wife of Nahuṣa and mother of Yayati. Narmada, the river, was wife of Purukutsa and

mother of Trasadasyu.

"Here genuine genealogy is mixed up with mythology, and the whole of this vaṁśa of the Pitṛkanyās arose out of a misunderstanding of this word. The genealogies say that Nahuṣa's sons were born of *piṭr-kanyā* Viraja, connect a *pitṛ-kanyā* with Viśvamahat, and call Kṛtvī a *pitṛ-kanyā*. There can be no doubt that the word meant 'father's daughter', that is 'sister', for union between brother and sister was not unknown, as Rigveda x, 10 about Yama and Yamī shows. Nahuṣa and Viśvamahat married their sisters or half-sisters, and the same may be presumed of Purukutsa and probably of *Ś*ukra and Suka. But the Brāhmaṇs misunderstood or perverted the word to mean 'daughter of the Pitṛs, (and therefore 'mind-born'), thus mythologizing it, and extended its use. Satyavati, as a queen and great grandmother of the Pandavas, was ennobled by the kṣatriyas in the fable making her the offspring of Vasu, king of Cedi ; and as mother of the great Vyasa, by the Brāhmaṇs in the additional fable that she was a daughter of the Pitṛs."[22]

We do not deny that in regard to the *Pitṛ-kanyās* the Puranas have mixed up mythology and genuine genealogies. But we wonder how an erudite scholar of the Puranas that he was, Pargiter has neglected to take note of the distinction that the Puranas, particularly the *Vayu Purana*, make between the *amūrta pitaraḥ (*formless ancestors) and the *mūrta-pitaraḥ* (ancestors with form). If he had taken serious notice of this distinction he would have perceived that the *pitṛ-kanyās*, like Menā who married Himalaya, have been mentioned as born of those Pitṛs who were formless. On the other hand, those *pitṛ-kanyās* who married Uśanas, Śukra or Śukrāchārya, and as stated by Pargiter himself in two foot-notes, two early Aila and two early Mānava kings were born of those *pitṛs* who had forms (*mūrta)* i.e. were human beings. It is true that there are cases to prove that sister marriage did occur in Iran but was condemned by the Indo-Aryans. The *Ṛgvedic*

hymn referred to by Pargiter does not show that Yama had married Yami. Unlike the Iranian tradition, which mentions Yima having married his sister Yamikā the above-mentioned Ṛgvedic hymn only shows Yama's horror in uniting with his sister Yami. The simple explanation of the marriages of the *kanyas* of human *pitṛs* is that the daughter of the *pitṛs* residing in Deva or Pitṛloka had married kings or early Aryan colonists of India. When these marriages took place the Indo-Aryans had not lost contact with their former home-land and perhaps considered it an honour to marry girls of Pitṛloka. It was only when the home country was completely forgotten that Yama, instead of being the ruler of Pitṛloka, was turned into a ruler over dead mortals and Pitṛloka was consigned to the nether world. The desire to ascend the throne of Devaloka or to marry the girls of Pitṛloka was replaced by the hope to enter Devaloka and unite with the *pitṛs* after death.

As India owes a great debt to Manu Vaivasvata, so do the Iranians to Yama Vaivasvata. Parsi writers who call him Jamashid, liken his reign to our '*Rama-Rajya*' and go into ecstasies while narrating his achievements. F. C. Davar writes :—

> "Jamshid was the father of Iranian civilization and therefore, as in the case of the primeval ancestors of various nations, he has been credited with numerous discoveries that are helpful to mankind. Spinning and weaving are both traceable to his reign. He is said to have taught people the baking of bricks and building of houses. Sailing in ships and pearl fishery are also attributed to his initiation. In his reign agriculture was developed, iron weapons were invented, gold, silver and gems came into use, musical instruments were devised, perfume was extracted from flowers, and according to Albiruni sugar was prepared from sugarcane. Jamshid's predecessor Hoshang deserves the honour of having discovered fire, while Tehmuras, who flourished between Hoshang and Jamshid,

introduced the alphabet. Medical science was, however, developed in the times of Faridun, a successor of Jamshid. No nation without well-built roads can be called civilized and Jamshid is said to have been a pioneer in this direction also. In short, Jamshid was the man to transform a nomadic race into a nation of settled and regular habits. It was Jamshid who lit the torch of civilization and inspired his fellow countrymen to treat the path of virtue and morality."[23]

We now proceed to give, in brief, an account of the Peshdadian and Kaiyanian kingly dynasties of Iran, which ruled during the proto-historic period with which alone we are concerned. Yima or Yama belonged to the Peshdadian line and, according to the genealogy available to us, was its fourth king. The first monarch Gayomard is stated to have been the progenitor of the Iranian race. As his son Shyamak was killed by what is called a 'black diva', his grandson Hushang succeeded him. He was followed by Tahmurz, who is said to have learnt the art of writing from the 'demons' whom he had conquered and introduced it among his subjects. Modern scholars are sceptical about the introduction of this art among an Aryan people at such an early stage. Be that as it may, we would only like to say that if there is any truth in the legend, the 'demons' referred to in the *Vendidad* must have been the Asuras mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* who were much more civilized than the Aryans as would be clear from the next chapter.

Tahmurz was succeeded by Yima, whom we have already equated with Yama, the brother of Manu Vaivasvata. We are told that in the concluding part of his reign Yima became proud and haughty and unpopular with his subjects. He was defeated in battle by Azi Dāhaka and ultimately killed by him. Azi Dāhaka is no other than Ahi Dāsa or Asura Vṛtra mentioned in the Rigveda and the *Brāhmaṇas*. This identification has been unanimously approved by scholars.

The murder of Yima by Azi Dāhaka was avenged by

Thṛta, son of Athvya who defeated and killed Ahi Dāsa. The Avestan Thṛta has been equated with Vedic Tṛta. This equation too is universally agreed to, as Athvya, the name of the father of Thṛta, resembles Āptya, the father of Vedic Tṛta. It is surprising that although, according to the Vedic tradition, Indra had killed Ahi Dāsa or Vṛtra, this act is attributed by some Rigvedic verses also to Tṛta. Thṛta seems to have been the last ruler of united Iran or we might even say of the kingdom of United Indo-Iranians. He had three sons—Selm (Sarima), Tur and Aerij and divided his kingdom among them. Selm received the western part of the ancestral kingdom, Tur got the north-east or Turan and Aerij, the youngest, received Iran, the best part of the then Iranian domain. As the favour shown to Aerij by Tṛta was resented to by his other two sons, they combined their forces and killed Aerij after their father's death. The son of Aerij was Minucheher, who wreaked vengeance on his two uncles by killing them. As Tur was the principal instigator of the plot against Aerij after his death at the hands of Minucheher, constant feuds were fought between the rulers of Turān and Iran for centuries. The bitterness created by these wars became so intense that the Iranians and Turanians became national enemies. Nozar, the son of Minucheher was attacked and killed by Afrasiab, the famous ruler of Turān, who subjugated Iran and ruled over it for a number of years.

The people of Iran revolted against Afrasiab under the leadership of Keikobada. The insurrection succeeded and Kaikobada was placed on the throne of Iran. With Kaikobada there was a change of dynasty. The word '*Kai*' is a variation of the Sanskrit word '*Kavi*' and the new dynasty came to be called the '*Kavi*' or, to use its Pehlavi equivalent, the Kaiyanian dynasty.

Kaikobada was succeeded by Kai Kaus, who has been identified by almost all scholars with Kavi Uśanā, who is no other than the famous Shukracharya of Indian mythology. We give below extract from F. C. Davar's "Iran and India

through the Ages" in support of this identification.

"One of the important characters of the Indo-Iranian age was Kavi Ushanā or Kāvya Ushanā, who according to the Ṛgveda VIII 23, 17, had installed a holy fire for popular worship, for fire had always been regarded sacred even in pre-Zarathushtrian times. This Vedic Kavi Ushanā, who is described as a Rishi and the special friend of Indra, resembles the Kayānian king Kavi Ushan of the *Avesta*, immortalized under the name of Kaikāoos in the epic of Firdausi. It is true however that Kaikāoos is not credited in the Avesta with the achievement of installation of the holy fire but it is well known to the readers of the Shāhnāmeh that his paternal grandson, the saintly king Kaikhusru, known in the *Avesta* as Kavi Husravah, had installed the fire Āzar Gushasp. It is possible that Kaikhusru's achievement was ascribed by the Vedic bards to his grandfather Kaikāoos or Kavi Ushanā."[24]

As the above extract shows, Kei Kaus was succeeded on the throne of Iran by his grandson Kei Hushrava (Khusru) as Siavush, his father, had already been killed by Afrasiab. Kavi Hushrava is the most important monarch of the Kavi or Kaiyanian dynasty. He is said to have united all the Aryan communities and, after waging a long war, killed Afrasiab. Hushrava's son Aurvataspa (Lohrasp) renounced his claim to the throne in favour of his son Kavi Vishtasp, the famous protagonist of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) and his religious reforms. According to the prevailing view it was during the reign of Kavi Vishtasp that religious civil wars took place among the Indo-Iranian people and the Indo-Aryans finally separated themselves from the Iranians. Spenṭodat (Ishendiar) could not occupy the throne of Iran, as he, at the instigation of his own father Vishtasp, was killed by Rustam, the great warrior of the Iranian epic *Shah Nama*. Thus the Kavi or Kaniyanian dynasty of Iran seems to have ended with Vishtasp, during whose reign both his father and the prophet Zoroaster were killed in the course of the civil wars. These two dynasties of Iran, more parti-

cularly the Kavi dynasty, produced a number of kings whose names occur in the Indian tradition. Our purpose in giving this brief account of Iranian rulers is to familiarise the reader with them as there would be many occasions to allude to some of them in subsequent chapters.

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Chapter
Three

The Devasura Wars and the Migration of the Asuras to the Valley of the Indus

In the concluding portion of our first chapter we stated that, besides the Devas, a number of other tribes inhabited Devaloka, prominent among them being the Pitṛs and the Asuras. We have discussed the Pitṛs in our previous chapter and now we take up the Asuras.

Faced with repeated references to the Asuras in the Indian literature, the first reaction of the Indologists was to treat them as imaginary beings. Dr. Konow thought that they were "no human beings".[1] F. E. Pargiter did not deny that they were human beings, but looked upon them as the uncivilized aborigines whom the Aryans met and defeated when they entered India from the mid-Himalayan regions.[2] P. L. Bhargava contradicts Pargiter and says that "nothing can be a greater travesty of truth than to connect it (the word 'Asura') with the aborigines because in the Ṛgvedic period the word was a synonym of Deva, a god, and was particularly applied to the highest of the gods."[3] R. C. Bhandarkar, disagreeing with those who had tried to identify the Asuras with the Iranians, thought that the view that the "Asuras represent the Asuras of Assyria seems more plausible".[4] A. Banerji Shastri, in his monograph 'Asura India', has advocated the same view. However, to us the identification of Assyria with the original home of the Asuras appears to be erroneous. It is possible that in the course of their

various migrations the Asuras may have influenced Assyria, but to make it their original home is to ignore the entire Indian tradition. The *Amarakośa* designates the Asuras as '*Pūrva-devāḥ*' or former gods, and therefore, their cradle-land can be placed only in Devaloka or Central Asia.

Traditional accounts ascribe the origin of various races to a number of Prajapatis. The word 'Prajapati' means 'the head of the progeny' or patriarch. Kashyapa is regarded as the foremost among the *Prajapatis*. He was the son of Marichi and is said to have been born as a result of the austerities practised by his father in water. R. Ghirshman has tried to connect the names of the town of Kazvin and the Caspian Sea with the Kassites. It is not improbable that the Caspian Sea, Kazvin, Kassites and a host of other place names, such as Kashmir, Kashaghar and Kashi preserve the memory of Kashyapa.

Kaśyapa married several daughters of another *Prajāpati* called Dakṣa. His three principal wives were Diti, Aditi and Danu. From Diti were born the Daityas and from Danu, the Dānavas. Aditi became the mother of the Ādityas, who in later ages came to be regarded as the true gods by the Vedic Aryans. The eldest, the Daityas, and the youngest, the Dānavas, seem to have developed mutual friendly relations as they have been coupled together under the name 'Asuras' and are said to have joined their forces in the Devasura wars against the Devas.

The Daityas being the eldest, ruled over their father's territories. As we have seen in the first chapter, the rulers of Devaloka were known as Devas and, therefore, the Asuras came to be known as such. Even after they had been deprived of their sovereign status the word 'deva' stuck to them and they came to be called the *Purva-devas*.

When the Ādityas became strong they demanded a share in their paternal territories. On refusal by the Asuras conflicts arose and ultimately resulted in what the Puranas describe as Devāsura Wars. The Puranic account that the

Devas and the Asuras were brothers is supported by the *Brāhmaṇas*, which in their sacredness stand next only to the Vedas. The *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* states that "the Devas and the Asuras were both sons of Prajapati" :

Devāścha vā asurāścha prajāpaterdvayāḥ putrāḥ āsan. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (14.4.1.1). furnishes the additional information that "the Devas were younger and the Asuras the elder sons."

Kanīyasā eva devā jyāyasā asurāḥ.

The *Kāṭhka Samhitā* (31.8) hints at the cause of the wars between the two when it states that "the earth belonged to the Asuras and the Devas said to them 'give this to us' "—

Asurāṇāṁ vā iyaṁpṛthavyāsīt devā abruvan datta naḥsyā iti.

All these statements found in the Vedic literature have been summed up by the *Mahābhārata* in the following couplets:—

Idam tu śrūyate pārtha yuddhe devāsure purā.
Asurā bhrātaro jyeṣṭhā devāścāpi yavīyasāḥ.
Teṣāmapi Śrīnimittaṁ mahānāsītsamuchchayaḥ.
Yuddham varṣasahasrāṇi dvātṛṁśad abhavatkila.
Ekārṇavām mahīm kṛtvā rudhireṇa pariplutām.
Jaghnurdaityāmstathā devāstridivam chābhilebhire.

"Oh Arjuna, we have heard that formerly in the Devāsura War, the elder brothers, the Daityas, and the younger brothers, the Devas, fought for gaining wealth. The war lasted for a thousand years. The Devas turned the entire earth into an ocean of blood, killed the Daityas and obtained the three Devalokas (*tridiva*)" .[5]

It would appear that the Asuras had taken to Agriculture and other sedentary occupations earlier than the Devas. The latter, who were perhaps still semi-nomads, envied them and coveted the Asura lands. They entered *Tridiva* from the north across the Syr Darya. This seems to have been the uniform pattern of invasion from the north and the north-east and the Devas do not appear to have been an exception.

The Puranas mention twelve Devasura wars and give a separate name to each of them. They refer to the immediate

cause in connection with a few of them but are silent about others. The first one, in which Narasimha, literally signifying 'a lion among men', killed Asura Hiraṇya Kashipu was, perhaps, fought in Devaloka itself. Narasiṁha, pleased with the righteous conduct of Hiraṇya Kashipu's son Prahlada crowned him as 'the Indra of the Asuras'. However, it is not clear whether Prahlada was allowed to retain the whole of Devaloka or only a part of it. The doubt arises as his son Virochana, who succeeded him, is said to have ruled over the fifth *Pātāla*, one of the seven regions bearing the name *Pātāla*.

Another Devāsura War is named *Tārakāmaya* which was due to Soma eloping with (Tārā) the wife of Brihaspati, a priest of the Āṅgirasa clan and the preceptor of the Devas. In the course of this war Virochana was killed by Indra and his son Bali had to migrate to another *Pātāla*, which is presumably Bactria, also called *Bali-Ālaya* or *Bali-Saḍma*. Bali was perhaps the most illustrious of Asura rulers and fought many a war with the Devas with varying fortunes. Perhaps the most important of the wars was the one connected with *Samudra-manthana* or the churning of the *Kṣīrasāgara*.

It is stated by the Puranas that the Devas and the Asuras temporarily patched up their differences and joined to churn the *Kṣīrasāgara* with a view to obtaining the nectar of immortality. In this task Vāsuki, the chief of the Nāga race, assisted them. In the course of churning, various valuable products were obtained besides the nectar. However, the Devas, instead of giving Asuras their legitimate share, cheated them and appropriated the entire nectar. The *Kṣīrasāgara* has been identified by various scholars with the Caspian Sea, through which trade passed between India and China in the east and the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea on the west. It may be that the control of this sea-route was the immediate cause of the renewed hostilities. In this war also the Asuras were beaten, but they recovered soon to challenge the Devas. It seems that it was not by force of arms but by trickery practised upon Bali by Vāmana, that the Asuras

were forced out of Bactria to migrate to another *Pātāla*, situated in the Valley of the Indus.

A careful scrutiny of the traditional accounts leads to the hypothesis that the area of conflict of the twelve wars extended from Central Asia to the sub-continent of India. The Asuras were constantly pushed towards the south and south-east and the theatres of the wars came to be spread over Eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and India. The proof of this is to be found in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.154) which points out that "the Devas, Pitṛs and men were on one side and the Asuras, Piśāchas and Rakshasas on the other side".
Devāḥ pitaro manuṣyāstenyata āsan asurā rakṣāmsi piśāchā anyataḥ.

The *Taittirīya Samhitā* uses almost identical words and also makes it unmistakably clear that it is referring to the two contending parties in the Devāsura wars. In these references the word '*pitarāḥ*' stands for the subjects of Yama (Iranian Yima) and '*manuṣyāḥ*' for the progeny or descendants of Manu. If any doubt still remains regarding India being one of the theatres of these wars, it may be set at rest by references in the Puranas to a number of kings of both the Solar and the Lunar dynasties participating in them on behalf of the Devas. In the case of Kakutstha, the great-grandson of Manu, it is specifically mentioned that he aided the Devas in the war against the Asuras, designated as Āḍīvaka.

We now return to the *Pātāla* in the Indus Valley, the first Indian refuge of the Asuras. Some Greek writers have given to this Valley, particularly to the part which is known as Sindh, the name 'Patalene'. According to them the headquarters of Patalene was Pātāla. Vincent Smith has identified Pātāla with Brahmanabad. Ragozin, quoting the Greek historian Arrian, equates it with Hyderabad. This latter equation is supported by Alexander Cunningham who, after discussing every possible site in the Indus delta, reaches the conclusion that there are "very strong grounds for identifying Hyderabad with the ancient *Pātāla*".[6]

The Asuras, thus driven from pillar to post by the Devas, seem to have found some breathing time in the Indus Valley. Here they laid the foundations of a magnificent civilization which has now come to be known as the Harappan civilization (after the name of the modern village of Harappā, in West Pakistan).

Our view that the Asuras were the authors of the Harappan civilization has at present little support from the world of scholars, particularly from archaeologists. So many theories have been propounded in respect of this problem due mainly to the non-decipherment of the Indus script that in the existing conditions it would be futile for us to expect any kind of unanimity. There is hardly any important human type now found in India whose claims to its authorship have not been championed by one scholar or the other. John Marshall tentatively put forth the claims of the Dravidians and by now it has become a fashion not to disagree with his view. However, some have tried to modify it by associating the Mundas as junior partners of the Dravidians in building up the Indus civilization. Waddell picked up the cause of the Sumerians, calling them the "Lost Aryans", and tried to make Sumer, the land of the fore-fathers of the Indo-Aryans. This view also has been amended by some scholars who look upon the Sumerians as a branch of the Dravidians, but for all practical purposes, support Marshall. Then there are others who champion the Nagas. However, two basic hypotheses can be discerned from this wilderness of varying opinions. There are those who advocate the theory of Dravidian origin and those who advocate an Aryan origin. The Sumerians, and the Nagas have been affiliated with the Aryans by some scholars and with the Dravidians by some others. The claims of the Asuras, as the architects of this great civilization, have also not gone by default. In the twenties, A. Banerji Shastri pressed their claim in his monograph "Asura India". What vitiated his theory was his attempt to identify the Asuras with the Assyrians in the face of the entire Indian tradition

pointing to their affiliation with the Devas.

As already indicated, the Asuras had a common father with the Devas in *Prajāpati* Kashyapa. Secondly, they have been called '*Pūrva-Devas*' and thus were the rulers of Devaloka. Thirdly, Vedic and Puranic literatures repeatedly mention that they performed Vedic sacrifices. Fourthly, they are stated to have been the speakers of the Vedic language, although only in its corrupt form. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* calls the language of the Mlechchhas *Asuryā Bhāṣā*. Finally, Bhṛgu and his descendants were the priests of the Asuras. Bhṛgu is one of the most important of the ancient Vedic Rishis and the Bhargavas are counted among the best of Brahmins. The affinity of blood, name, language and rituals obliges us to regard the Asuras as a branch of the Aryan people.

If the tradition is any indication, there was a constant intermingling of peoples in Devaloka. Indra is said to have married Paulomï, the daughter of the Dānava Pulimat. Rishi Bhṛgu, son of God Varuna, married the daughter of Hiraṇya Kashipu, a Daitya; and Bhṛgu's descendant Tvaṣṭṛ took Daitya Prahlāda's daughter in marriage. Tvaṣṭṛ gave his own daughter Śaraṇyu to Vivasvata, a Deva, and from this union were born Manu and Yama. Yayāti, a king of Lunar dynasty, married Śarmiṣṭhā, the daughter of Asura Vṛṣaparvan. The story of Marudgaṇas is even more revealing. They were the sons of Diti, the mother of the Daityas, but they became Indra's most trusted lieutenants in his wars against the Asuras.

Peoples living side by side borrow material things much more easily than ritual or religious ideas. However, in Devaloka common ritual and religious concepts seemed to have been in vogue. It is significant that the priestly class in Devaloka conducted the religious ceremonies of both the Devas and the Asuras as freely as the two entered into marriage relations with each other. Thc Bhargavas were in the front rank of such priests. Kavi Uśanā was the priest of

the Asuras. So were his sons Śaṇḍa and Marka, although later on they crossed over to the Devas. Viśvarūpa, another Bhārgava, son of Tvaṣṭṛ, agreed to function as the priest of the Devas but continued to help the Asuras secretly. He was killed by Indra for this act of double dealing. This enraged Tvaṣṭṛ to such an extent that he produced Vṛtra to wreak vengeance on Indra.

According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Vṛtra was adopted by Danu from whom the Dānavas traced their descent. However, being a Bhārgava by birth, Vṛtra was an expert in priestly lore. This should solve the mystery of the statements in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* to the effect that he taught the three Vedas, *Ṛk*, *Yajus* and *Sāman* to Indra. The legend runs as follows :

"Of old, everything here was within Vṛtra, to wit, the Ṛk, the Yajus and the Sāman. Indra wished to hurl the thunderbolt at him.

"He said to Vishnu, 'I will hurl the thunderbolt at Vṛtra, stand thou by me'—'So be it', said Vishnu, 'I will stand by thee: hurl it.' Indra aimed the thunderbolt at him. Vṛtra was afraid of the raised thunderbolt.

"He said, 'There is, here, a (source of) strength : I will give that up to thee; but do not smite me' and gave up to him the Yajus formulas. He (Indra) aimed at him a second time.

"He said, 'There is, here, a (source of) strength. I will give that up to thee; but do not smite me 'and gave up to him the Ṛk-verses. He aimed at him a third time.

' "There is, here, a (source of) strength : I will give that up to thee; but do not smite me' and gave up to him the Sāman-hymns (or tunes). Therefore they spread the sacrifice even to this day in the same way with those (three) Vedas, first with the Yajus-formulas, then with the Ṛk-verses, and then with the Sāman-hymns; for thus he (Vṛtra) at that time gave them up to him."[7]

The Vedic ritual had for its object the pleasing of the gods

and getting worldly things in return. Vṛtra seems to have been an expert in this type of ritual. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* Agni and Soma were at the beck and call of Vṛtra and Indra had to make unusual offerings to these two gods in order to induce them to leave Vṛtra and to come over to his side. It is also stated that daily offerings used to be made to Vṛtra by the gods in the morning, by men at noon and by the pitṛs in the after-noon. To sum up, Vṛtra combined in himself the role of a king and a priest. Such priest-kings are met with in the ancient history of many countries, particularly in Sumer.

The killing of such a powerful potentate as Vṛtra has been hailed by the Vedic Rishis as the greatest exploit of Indra and they tirelessly refer to it in his praise in hymn after hymn in the Rigveda. That he was a Brahmin is proved by the tradition that Indra incurred the sin of *Brahma-hatyā* for killing him and had to hide himself, probably due to unpopularity with the people for committing what was looked upon a heinous crime. During this short period of Indra's concealment Nahuṣa, the grandson of Yayāti, is said to have filled the office of Indra. This would make Vṛtra and the particular Indra who killed him the contemporary of Nahuṣa. Dr. Buddha Prakash in his "Rigveda and the Indus Valley Civilization" has suggested that Indra and Vṛtra were brothers. He refers to three verses in the Rigveda (IV, 18, 12, III, 48, 37 IV, 18, 37) and tries to prove that both of them were the sons of Prajapati Tvaṣṭṛ. If this conclusion is correct, we shall have to identify this particular Indra with the one who had killed his own father as mentioned in the first chapter.

We have referred in the foregoing pages to a number of legends found in the traditional literature to prove that the inhabitants of the former homelands of the Aryans were bound together by ethnic, social and religious ties and shared a common culture. It is this culture which the Asuras brought to the Indus Valley and on the foundation of which they

raised the civilization which has caused so many controversies among scholars.

As the Asuras were being repeatedly pushed to the south and south-east and as they abandoned one settlement for another they must also have left behind in each settlement a considerable number of their kith and kin. This is no doubt an assumption, but a highly plausible one because it is inconceivable that in the process of migration to unknown lands the whole mass of people will totally abandon their hearths and homes. So Asuras in some number must have continued to live in the old land, sprawling across Central Asia and comprising eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and as far up as the northern plains of the Indian Sub-Continent. Unfortunately, only a few of the ancient sites have been properly excavated, but whatever evidence archaeologists have already brought to light, tends to prove that inhabitants of all these regions belonged to the same or allied stock, and possessed a common culture which must have reached its full fruition in the Indus Valley.

It is relevant to remember in this connection that the population of Devaloka itself was a mixed one. We have seen how *Amarakośa* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* have listed a number of tribes such as Devas, Asuras, pitṛs, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, and Gandharvas as originating from a common parentage. Unfortunately, our existing state of knowledge is not sufficient to trace the remote connections, if any, of the ethnic groups among India's inhabitants such as the Proto-Australoid, the Mediterranean, the Mongoloid, the Alpine and Nordic with the early Indo-Iranians.

That the people of Central Asia, from where the Asuras had migrated were, according to tradition, a mixed breed has been accepted by many scholars and archaeologists. In fact Central Asia appears to have been the breeding ground of most of the racial types known in India. The Muṇḍās, classed among proto-Australoids, have been assigned to Central Asia on the basis of their linguistic affinity with the

group of Finno-Ugrian languages. De Hevesy was the first to notice the resemblance between these two groups of languages and has received the support of Validi, Flor, Schroder and the Indian ethnologist, B. Bonnerjea.[8]

Many scholars look upon the Dravidians as a branch of the Mediterranean race. Even these people have been traced back by some scholars to their ancestral home in Central Asia. Rahula Sankrityayana who, with his long residence in Russia, had benefited from the work of Soviet archaeologists, agreed with this view and thought that both the Mundas and the Dravidians had to leave their homelands as a result of the Scythian-Aryan conquests. Instead of calling them Muṇḍā-Dravids he preferred to call them Finno-Dravid race of Central Asia belonging to the Neolithic Age.[9]

It is well known that the Scythians, also known as *Śakas* (Sanskrit) or Sacae (Greek)were a hybrid people. Originally they appear to have been a branch of the Aryan nomads. They came to have mongol blood in their veins, firstly due to their proximity as neighbours and secondly due to conquest by them in later ages. The Russian archaeologist, Tolstove, in an article headed "The Central Asian Scythians in the light of the most recent archaeological Discoveries" states : "The work of the Khorezm Expedition in the reaches of the Amu-Daria and Syr-Daria interfluvia, and particularly along the branches of the old delta of the Syr-Daria, made it possible for us to familiarize ourselves with the centre of Central Asian Scythia. In ancient times, the area of the old delta of the Syr-Daria was a large country intersected by numerous channels, with a great many bogs and lakes, vividly recalling the places where, in Strabo's description, based upon Hecataeus of Miletus, dwelt the Massagetes, who 'occupy marshlands formed by rivers' or 'islands in these marshes.' " (Strabo, XI, 6,6-7). We have now mapped out, in this territory, the areas of settlement of four large tribal alliances of Central Asian Sacas (21) who took an active part, along with the Asi

(or Issedones) cited above, in the southward movement of the Sacae into Bactria and India. These were the Apasiaci in the Zhany-Daria basin, the Tokhary in the Kuvan-Daria valley, the Augasi in the lower interfluvia between the Kuvan-Daria and the Syr-Daria, and the Sakaravaki in the upper Inkar-Daria valley.[10]

We have already referred to the seven *Pātālas* in connection with the Asura chiefs Virochana and Bali. Nando Lal Dey, speaking of the Hūṇas, who later on got mixed up with the Sacae or Scythians referred to by Tolstove, supplies us with a good deal of information based on the accounts given by the Puranas and the *Mahabharata*, regarding some of the *Pātālas* which he locates in Central Asia including Tartary and Turkestan. He writes :— "Pātāla, though a general name, is evidently derived from the Eph-thalites or the white Huns; they were called white in contradistinction to the black or sun-burnt Huns of the North (ibid., p. 565). Rasātala or Pātāla was also the abode of the Dānavas (demons) who were also Turanians. (Dr. J. J. Modi's *Ancient Pataliputra* in JBBRAS, Vol. XXIV 1916-17, pp. 519-521.) The classical name of the Caspian Sea was Mare Caspium or Hyrcanum, which shows that the name was derived from the two parts of the name of Hiraṇya Kashipu (a *daitya*), the son of Kashyapa; and the ancient town of Hyrcania near the modern town of Asterabad to the southeast of the Caspian Sea must have been his capital, the ancient Hiraṇyapura (Padma P., Srishṭi, ch. 6) though tradition places it (q.v.) in India. Bali's palace was situated in Sutala or in the Trans Caspian District (Harivaṁśa, ch. 262). Kashyapa was the progenitor of the aforesaid tribes. The idea of Pātāla being below the surface of the earth, which can be entered through subterranean passage and the conception that it contains seven spheres, one above the other, have arisen out of a hazy memory of a primeval age, and the association of the region with the Nagas or serpents living underground has naturally led to the idea that it could be

entered by subterranean passages through holes on the surface of the earth. Its association also with the demons, cows and garuḍa, birds that cannot live with the serpents has resulted in its division into several distinct spheres".[11]

The remaining ethnic type which we have not discussed is the Alpine. That it prevailed in Central Russia is obvious because it has also been named Pamirian. The Alpines were predominantly Aryan. But the Aryans themselves, like the Scythians, were divided into numerous tribes and clans. Dr. Buddha Prakash, after having named a number of tribes spread over the vast land-mass extending from Caspian and the Aral to Kurukshetra, sums up as follows :

> It was inhabited by a large number of tribes and clans of these peoples speaking a variety of dialects of the Aryan speech and exhibiting different shades of a basic culture complex. Their relations consisted of frequently changing associations and alliances often characterised by conflicts and bickerings. There were also displacements and movements among them from one region to another, presenting a spectacle of invasions and incursions. But they had a genius for cultural advance , which became manifest in the growth of rural communities, characterised by agriculture, stock breeding, industry and trade at a very early period. In course of time, these settlements headed towards urban development and grew into metropolitan concentrations. The Indus Valley Civilization was the climax of this process of economic and cultural evolutions.[12] It would thus be only rational to presume that along with the Asuras many other tribes (mentioned in our first chapter) as residing in Devaloka, must have reached India and also the intermediate regions where they had halted during their migrations.

The Harappan Civilization ranks with the few ancient-most civilizations of the world so far discovered. If the Asuras were its authors, their original home in Central Asia must have been one of the centres which had given

birth to ancient cultures. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether South-West Asia or the Caspian basin first evolved the Neolithic culture based on farming, domestication of cattle and settled life in villages. Those who locate the commencement of the Neolithic Age in South-West Asia are convinced that "the high Anatolian and further Iranian plateaux, the Caspian basin and Transcaspia, Baluchistan and Central Arabia were peripheral to the original centres.[13]

Although on the basis of Indian and Iranian traditions it appears plausible that the Caspian basin and Transcaspia were peripheral to the original centres of the Aryans we are under no compulsion to agree entirely with one view or the other. It is not denied that they had evolved the Neolithic culture almost at the very beginning of the Neolithic Age. What is more important for our purpose is to discover the similarity, if any, between the Neolithic culture of Central Asia as known from the excavations conducted at old sites like Anau and Hissar and that of the Indus Valley and Baluchistan based on archaeological discoveries in these regions.

Although Jacquetta Hawkes has adopted the view that the Caspian basin and Transcaspia were peripheral to the original centre of Neolithic culture in South-West Asia, she has not failed to notice what was common to the two regions with which we are at present concerned. Referring to a number of settlements of the Neolithic age round the south-east corner of the Caspian sea such as Tape Hissar, Anau, in Turkmenistan and the eastern-most Namazga, she says :

> These small towns and villages date well back into the fourth millennium and probably much beyond. Here farming communities penetrated more or less slowly eastward towards Baluchistan and the Indus region. Tells mark their settlements along either side of the Central desert, on the north along and beyond the valleys of the Elburz range, on the south through Fars and Makran. There were cultural differences between the northern and southern peoples that still persisted when they converged upon Baluchistan.

Here the villages of the farmers clustered thickly on the uplands west of the Indus. At a place near Quetta there is evidence for pre-pottery Neolithic occupations and at another in the Zhob valley the earliest encampment seems to have been of semi-nomadic people with horses, donkeys, humped cattle (zebu) and sheep. But at most sites the finely painted wares made a link between these Indian farmers and those of Iran and Iraq. As might be expected, particularly close relationship exists with eastern Iran, most notably with Hissar.[14]

Although Jaquetta Hawkes has noted the similarities between the Neolithic cultures of Anau and Hissar in north-eastern Iran and that of the Indus Valley, she has laid more emphasis on the beginnings of this culture in southern Baluchistan. She has also mentioned Iraq along with eastern Iran as influencing the culture of the Indus Valley owing to the belief of some scholars that the Indus Civilization owed its initial impetus to the Sumerian Civilization. However, by now a number of sites have been excavated in Afghanistan and in Northern and Central Baluchistan such as Mundigak, Quetta, Loralai (Rana Ghundai) and Kalat (Anjira). All these have the carbon-14 datings of 3500 B.C.—3200 B.C., while no sites in Southern Baluchistan have been dated earlier than 2500 B.C. This clearly indicates that the earliest impetus was imparted to the Indus Civilization by Central Asia through eastern Iran and that Iraq did not play any part in those early times.

Although Stuart Piggot has also laid emphasis on the sites of southern Baluchistan he has not failed to connect the civilization of the Indus Valley with that of northern Iran. He has observed, "In Northern Persia there are certain points of evidence suggesting that some phase of Harappa Civilization was contemporary with the Hissar III period, and at Anau, in Russian Turkestan, Harappa contacts seem perceptible in Anau III."[15]

Let us now see what tangible evidence is available to connect the people of the Indus Valley with Central Asia,

the original home of the Asuras. We would first take up the skeletal material unearthed at Mohenjodaro. Says Earnest Mackey :—"Colonel Sewell and Dr. Guha have identified no less than four different races : the Proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Mongolian and Alpine, although the two latter are represented, with certainty, by only one skull of each type. The Proto-Australoid and Mediterranean types, which form the majority of the specimens discovered, were both dolichocephalic, and they agree in many ways with skulls found by Wootley at Al'-ubaid, by the present writer at Kish, and also at Anau, Nal and other sites.[16]

As a second point of contact between the Indus Valley and Central Asia we take up the evidence based on barley and wheat. The remarks made by Stuart Piggott in this connection are interesting :—

> The Egyptian finds include, significantly enouhh, the *hexastichum* (six-row) variety of barley, as in pre-historic India, and the wild varieties of the grass from which the cultivated grain was produced still grow in Turkestan, Persia, and North Afghanistan. The wild ancestors of what is known as bread wheat (with 21 chromosomes as against 14 and 7 in the other two main wheat groups) are unknown, but it is interesting to note that the most primitive forms of the cultivated varieties are grown today in Persia, Afghanistan, the region around Bokhara, Kashmir, and Western India, and there is some reason to think that the *sphaerococcum* and *compactum* forms may be the earliest forms of bread wheat, arising out of hybridization of the other wheats with kindred grasses. On botanical grounds such workers as Vavilov have suggested that bread wheat originated on the Himalayan edge of Afghanistan; others have looked to the region between the Zagros Mountains and the Caspian. The archaeological evidence is slight, but impressions of bread wheat grains of the *Triticum vulgare* group were found in potsherds from Anau I in Turkestan, and point to the early emergence of the

type in regions not too remote from Western India, where the Harappa Culture evidence shows that bread wheats were being grown in the third millennium B.C.[17]

The evidence regarding domestic animals is equally significant. We quote Piggott again:

"A few camel bones of the Indian one-humped race *(camelus dromedarius)* were found at Mohenjo-daro and at Harappa, and they have also been found at Anau in Turkestan and in the neolithic Tripolye culture of South Russia, where they are likely to be approximately contemporary with the Harappa Civilization.....The domestic ass *(Equus asinus)* and the horse *(Esuus caballus)* are both represented, and we have seen that the latter animal was already known to the first inhabitants of the Rana Ghundai site in North Baluchistan; it was also known from Anau and from the second phase of Sialk. The remains suggest comparison with the modern Indian 'country-bred' animal.....the horse is at least not an original inhabitant of Mesopotamia.....it was presumably imported from 'the mountains' of Highland Persia or Turkestan, which with Baluchistan formed a common geographical province within which the earliest evidence of horse-taming comes.[18]

Regarding contact between the Indus Valley on the one hand and Hissar and Anau on the other, Piggott finally states:

In Hissar III Culture of Northern Persia, which probably dates from Akkadian times in the main, there are several objects which seem to show Harappa connexions, and the same applies to Anau III. Both sites, for instance, have Harappa metal types, and at Anau is a clay cart-model comparable with some from Chanhu-daro. The odd faience bead from this site too and a segmented bead from Shah-tepe might come from Harappa as well as from Sumer, and the etched carnelican beads at Hissar III and Shah-tepe could again be Indian rather than Sumerian in

origin, though the evidence is not conclusive.[19]

All this similarity is not surprising, as Frankfort had observed long ago that, "there are detailed resemblances between China pottery on the one hand and Baluchistan wares on the other which suggest a centre of diffusion somewhere to the west of the Pamir and the Hindukush and to the south of the Caucasus and the Caspian sea."

All the archaeological data alluded to above is based on the material excavated some years ago. Meanwhile Soviet archaeologists have carried out excavation on several sites in Turkemenistan. The following long extract from an article by S.P. Gupta and A.Y. Schatenko (vide *Bharati*—Varanasi, Vol. No. X-XI, 1966-68, pp. 190-97) confirms the conclusion already reached that a close connection existed between the people of Central Asia and Indus Valley :

> Soviet Central Asia is a vast land between the Caspian sea and the Pamir mountains. It is divided into a number of republics, one of which is Turkmenia or Turkmenistan. It lies largely between the Eastern Coast of the Caspian sea and the Oxus river (Amu Darya). While in the south it is traversed by the Kopet Dagh chain of hills, its central and northern regions are covered under the deserts of Kara Kum.
>
> Although the periodization of site was not very satisfactory the antiquities dug were sufficient to indicate (Mackey 1938, Piggott 1950) that there are comparable elements with those existing in Iranian and Harappan Bronze Age sites of 3rd-2nd millennia B.C.
>
> However, the position has radically changed during the last decade. After a comparative lull of archaeological activities for nearly half a century, South Turkmenia once again attracted the attention of archaeologists this time only Soviet. Thus in 1952 Litvinski put a trial trench at a site called Namazga Tepe. This site seemed to be more promising than Anau, with the result that in 1956 it was systematically excavated first by Kuftin and then by

Masson. The results obtained were superb. It yielded a continuous sequence of cultural deposits divided into six levels or periods starting from the early Chalcolithic times of circa 4000 B.C. up to the beginning of the Iron Age, about 1000 B.C.

Broadly speaking, the Namazga stratigraphy can be divided into two cultural groups : one, Chalcolithic (periods I to III) and second, Bronze Age (Periods V and VI), period IV being the stage of transition, the lower levels more Chalcolithic and the upper levels more Bronze Age. It is a very curious phenomenon of the history of this region that during the Chalcolithic period the neighbouring people of Iran greatly influenced and shaped the character of its culture, while, as soon as the Bronze Age is ushered in, the Iranian cultural influence is shaken off and the resultant vacuum is partly filled up by Indian traits.

Out of about a dozen sites excavated so far in South Turkmenia-Kara Depe, Gara Depe, Altin Depe, Akh Tepe, Khapuz Depe, Geoksur Yalangach Depe, Deshliji Depe, Yaz Depe, Tahirbai Depe, Auchin Depe, Anau and Namazga Depe—only Altin Depe, Khapuz Depe, Anau and Namazga Depe have yielded material of the mature Bronze Age of times, and only Tahirbai Depe, Auchin Depe, Anau and Namazga Depe Namazga V yielded material of the Namazga VI times. Out of all these, the recent excavations of Altin Depe by the latter author 'under the general direction of V.M. Masson' have produced the largest amount of material comparable to the Harappan antiquities.

Even some of the miniature vessels, so characteristic of the Harappan pottery, have their counterparts in Turkmenia. But that is not all, even technically the two wares share the same process of manufacture. The pots were turned on a fast wheel using the fingers to give some definite shape to the clay-lump. The pots were, then, in most of the cases, treated with a thin wash or slip of reddish

colour. But red slip is practically unknown in Namazga V times, although the red slipped ware occupies a prominent place in the Harappa Culture. Nevertheless the thick sturdy ware has red core with stony feeling and thin delicate ware has buff core and smooth texture. Pots made of alabaster in commoner shapes also occur in both the regions. One thing that stands out more clearly in the case of the Turkmenian ware is its preference for carinated, linear and angular profile in marked contrast to the smoothly flowing profile of most of the Harappan types.

The recent excavations at Altin Depe have produced a few more objects to demonstrate this influence more clearly and convincingly. There is a straight handed copper frying pan from Mohenjodaro, the counterpart of which has been found at Altin Depe. Here again, a leaf shaped dagger or knife without midrib has been discovered.

Such a similarity in shape, material and manufacturing technique also exists in the case of beads. One of the most characteristic Harappan types is segmented faience head which is found in good numbers in South Turkmenian sites, including Anau and Altin Depe. Similarly, eye-bead, step-bead, denticulated barrel shaped, round, tubular, rectangular bead, etc., of faience, carnelian, agate, gold and lapis lazuli are found in both the regions. It is important to note that in all probability Afghanistan was the source of lapis lazuli for them.

Whether ivory was exported from India to Turkmenia or not is a moot point but ivory objects from the latter region do show very close resemblance, even identity. Rectangular ivory sticks used as dices are stylistically the same. The markings on them are concentric circles—one on face, two on the second face, three on the third face, but a group of other signs on the fourth face. On the Indian example it consists of four longitudinal parallel groves while in the Turkmenian example it consists of two panels, each containing across bracketed between two

groups of four horizontal parallel lines. Similarly, there is one thick rectangular and one square ivory piece with markings of rows of concentric circles, and with corners filled with oblique parallel lines respectively. Their exact utility is a matter of speculation but might have been used in some game, or as charms in both the regions.

Terracotta carts with solid wheels, in one case an animal headed cart at Altin Depe, show very close affinity with the Harappan examples. Even the axle-knobs show this similarity. But apart from these toy-carts, it is the presence of three nude male figures including one at Altin Depe, which is closely comparable with those found at Harappa. On the other hand, compartmented toilet containers of soap-stone and terracotta found at Mohenjodaro have their counterparts at Altin Depe, but made of only burnt clay. However, the exterior incised decoration of the Indian as also of Iranian and Mesopotamian, is different from the scoop decoration of the Turkmenian examples. A terracotta object called 'Window-screen' at Chanhudaro has also its parallel at Altin Depe.

In this category of the terracottas, numerous objects of unburnt clay should also be considered. In it the most outstanding example is that of a well-built bull with perfect naturalistic anatomical contours. It compares very well with the terracotta bull from Mohenjodaro. Similar parallelism can be observed in the case of spindle-wheels, cones, dices, beads, etc. However an oval object with peripheral holes from Altin Depe whose identity as net-sinker, or weaving tool is more conjectural than real has also its counterpart at Mohenjodaro.

But by far the most important evidence of cultural contact between the two regions is the presence of a common seal-motif. At Altin Depe is a silver seal with the following representation....

At Altin Depe and other sites, cultural assemblage also consists of chert-blades similar in shape and manufacturing

technique as seen in the Harappan Collections.

The evidence set forth in the preceding paragraphs leads to the conclusion that the peoples inhabiting the Indus Valley were not different from those residing in Hissar and Anau. Thus available archaeological evidence reinforces the tradition embodied in Indian literatures that the Asuras, when expelled by the Devas from Central Asia or Puranic Devaloka, found asylum in *Patala*, which we have already equated with Hyderabad (Sind) on the evidence furnished by Greek writers. We believe that well-established tradition should not be easily set aside particularly when it can be supported by evidence made available to us by the modern scientific method. We would go even a step further and say that when two rival theories have equal support from scientifically collected evidence we would prefer to accept the one which is backed by tradition. There is a long tradition of the presence of the Asuras in India. There is hardly any branch of knowledge which is not stated to have been indebted to them. In architecture they seem to have been pre-eminent and one of the most important styles is named after Māyāsura or Asura Maya. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* uses the word 'Māyā' in connection with the Asuras. The Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtras speak of 'Āsurī Vidyā or the Science of the Asuras'. The authors of the Vedic Index equate 'Āsurī Vidyā', with Maya and translate the word 'Maya' as 'Magic'. It would perhaps be more plausible to connect the word with 'Maya' the Asura architect. Of course the magnificent architecture introduced by Maya may have struck as 'Maya' or magic to novices in this art. This is borne out by the description in the Mahābhārata of Yudhiṣṭhira's Sabhā constructed by Maya. Their superiority in painting is manifest from the story of Chitralekha, the female friend of Usha, the daughter of Asura Bāṇa, descendant of Bali. In the field of philosophy they seem to have been materialists. This is illustrated by the Upaniṣadic story of Asura Bali's father Virochana, who unlike Indra is said to have identified the '*self*' with his physical

being. The *Bhagavadgītā* throws a flood of light on the mode of life of the Asuras when it discusses the two types of human beings born with *Daivi and Asuri* tendencies. We have already referred to the *Asuri* language. Pāṇini, the great grammarian, speaks of *Asuri* script. All this vast body of literature referring to the Asuras leads one to conclude that Indian culture is greatly indebted to them. The truth seems to be that the composite Indian culture is the result of the intermingling of the two main cultural streams which can be designated as the *Asuri* and the *Daivi*, the latter being the Aryan. But as the Asuras themselves were a branch of the Aryans, at present we have no alternative but to look upon the Harappan civilization as Aryan to which their Asura branch had made its special contribution. We have already indicated that it is this Asura branch of the Aryan people which had discarded the nomadic way of life and settled down as agriculturists earlier than the other branch of the Devas. The Bhṛgus, who acted as the priests of the Asuras for several generations, were skilled craftsmen. Besides being the discoverors of fire they appear to have been expert blacksmiths, chariot builders and physicians. The Vedas are held to be the source of all knowledge and the anecdote of Vṛtra imparting the Vedic lore to Indra only goes to show that the Devas had originally imbibed both material culture and ritual from the Asuras and their priests.

It may be superfluous to point out that some Indian scholars of repute have refused to join the prevailing chorus of assigning the authorship of the Harappan civilization to non-Aryans and have argued the case of Aryans with courage and great erudition. They have not only demolished the arguments in favour of prevailing theory but have also striven to establish that there are many features in the Harappan culture which are Vedic and, therefore, Aryan. Even according to our theory this similarity is not surprising in as much as the Asuras themselves were Aryans and brought to India from their common original home in Central Asia as much Vedic culture as had been evolved there before the date of

their migration. If it is reasonable to speak of an Indo-European culture, howsoever rudimentary it may have been, it is also possible to postulate a *Deva-Asura* culture. There may have been some differences between the two branches when they lived side by side in Devaloka but what was common must have outweighed the differences. As for example, while the Devas started honouring Indra in addition to Varuṇa, the older God, the Asuras may have refused to accept him. The fact that the Bhṛgus traced their descent from Varuṇa lends colour to this view. The points of divergence between the two must have been sharpened during the long period of their hostilities. The Asuras arrived in India long before the Aryans. During this interval both must have had new experiences arising from different habitats and contacts with different peoples. The result was that when they met again on the soil of India as opponents the gulf appeared so wide that the Ṛgvedic Aryans found a good deal to say against them. All the same, some common points still remained and it is these that have furnished substance to the view that the authors of the Harappan civilization were primarily Aryans.

Let us now see what the Vedic literature has to say about the Asuras and the various tribes into which they appeared to have been divided. The use of the word 'Asura' is frequent in the Vedic literature including Rigveda. R.G. Bhandarkar has stated : "In the Brāhmaṇas it signifies a race of beings inimical to the Devas, or gods. In the Ṛk-Saṁhitā it is mostly used in the sense of 'vigorous', 'powerful' and applied as an epithet to various gods such as Dyayus, Indra, Varuṇa, etc. But in three or four cases it denotes beings hostile or inimical to the gods. There are, however, a few passages in which what is said about the Asuras resembles that which is said in connection with the Dasyus, and there the word may be taken to denote enemies of men. In RV. VIII. 96.9, Indra is called upon to destroy by his wheel the Asuras who are not gods or are godless. In other places the gods are said to

have destroyed the hosts belonging to the Asuras Varcin and Pipru. Some gods (Indra, Agni and Sun) are called Asura-han or Asura-slayers."

"In the following passages the term Asura denotes the enemies of men more distinctly :—In AV. XIX. 66. I, the Asuras are spoken of as rivals (Sapatnān) by the worshipper and Agni is implored to slaughter them. If they were rivals of the worshipper, they must have been men like the Dasyus. Again in AV. IX. 2.17 and 18, Kāma is invoked to dispel the worshipper's rivals as the gods did the Asuras and as Indra hurled the Dasyus into utter darkness. Here Asuras are compared with the Dasyus and may like the latter the aborigines of a specific country. In AV.X.3.II, we have *Sa me śatrūnvi bādhatāmindro dasyūnivāsurān*. Here the amulet of the Varuṇa-tree is desired to destroy the wearer's enemies as Indra did the Dasyus, the Asuras." Here Dasyus and Asuras are put together, the former characterising the latter so as to make the whole signify "the Dasyu Asuras or aboriginal Asuras," or the expression may be taken to mean "Dasyus and Asuras"; in which case it is possible to understand that if the aborigines of India were called by the first name, the Asuras also must signify the aborigines of some other country."[21]

Bhandarkar need not have argued as hard as he has done, because the Vedic literature uses not only the epithets Dāsa, Dasyu and Asura indiscriminately but also applies the term 'Ahi' to them. For instance Vṛtra has been called not only Asura and Dasyu but also 'Ahi' (RV. II, 12, 3). As even the Paṇis have been called Dasyus (RV. VII, 6, 2) we cannot leave them out of consideration.

Let us begin with the Dasas and Dasyus. S.V. Ketkar in his monumental work in Marathi entitled 'Jñāna Kośa' has collected almost all the Rigvedic verses using the words 'Dasa' and 'Dasyu' and has arrived at the conclusion that they are identical in meaning and have been applied to the same people.

Śaṁbara, Śusanu, Vṛtra and Pipru have been called both Dasas and Dasyus. He is of the view that in the Rigveda these words merely signify 'enemy' of the Devas and of the Aryas and the cause of this enmity was not racial but one of worshipper of the Vedic Gods (Arya) and non-worshipper (Dasa or Dasyu). But faced with verses referring to *Dasavarna* (RV.II, 12,4) and *Aryavarna* he concedes that the Vedic singers did distinguish between the Dasas and the Aryas but the available evidence is insufficient to enable us to decide whether this distinction was based on race, ritual or language. The Dasas were wealthy, lived in towns or forts, had armies and even their women bore arms and participated in wars. According to Ketkar the use of the word Dasyu gradually disappeared and is not found in later literature. The word 'Dasa' also ceased to mean enemy and came to denote a 'slave'. However, there are only five verses in the Rigveda which use it in this sense.[22]

Next we come to the Paṇis. They have also been called Dasas and Dasyus (RV. V. 34,6-7; VII, 6, 3). Basing his account on a number of Rigvedic verses, Dr. Buddha Prakash writes:

The above reference makes it clear that the Dasas or Dasyus, called Paṇis, represented the commercial classes of people living in the cities. They practised trade and usury and monopolised the economic resources of the country. Their control over waters seems to mean their ownership of irrigation facilities in the countryside and their mastery of cows appears to stand for their lien over the cattle wealth of the rural communities. They cast their monetary net wide in the villages by installing and controlling waterworks and advancing loans to the people on high rates of interest and attaching their cattle as security. In the cities also they employed labour on a regimented pattern and held the reins of industrial production. This concentration of economic potential enabled them to extend their trade to international levels and command the commercial traffic of the then known

civilized world.[23]

Lastly we take up the Ahis or Nagas or Serpents. There is no doubt that the Rigvedic singers have included them among the Dasas. Vṛtra has been called Asura, Dasa and Ahi. Similar is the case with some other Dasa chiefs mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. As R. Ojha puts it, "Śuṣna had a 'brood', and was 'hissing' and Abruda appears to be 'cognate in nature to Ahi' and is mentioned with him".[24] *Atharva Veda* and the *Brāhmaṇas* also speak of the Ahis, particularly in connection with Vṛtra.

Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the great Asura people scattered over the lands from Syr Darya in Central Asia to the sub-continent of India, were sub-divided into many tribes and clans and their opponents, the Vedic Aryans, called them Asuras, Dasas, Dasyus, Paṇis and Ahis indiscriminately. They seem to have applied the term 'Asura' to them in the earliest period of their contact with them in Devaloka but gradually dropped it. Dasa, Dasyu and Ahi may belong to the period of the Indo-Iranian joint home as the description of Vṛtra fits in with that of the Iranian 'Azi-Dāhaka' corresponding to Vedic Ahi-dasa may be taken to support the view. So far as the term Dasyu is concerned it occurs in the *Avesta* in three forms as '*dainyu*', '*dakhyu*' and '*dapyu*'. In the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings it is spelt '*dahyu*'. According to Dr. Buddha Prakash, from the Iranian form '*dahyu*' 'have come the Hindi words '*deh*' and '*dehāt*' meaning 'village' and 'countryside'. He also refers to Jahangir S. Tevadia who has pointed out that the Avestic phrase '*aryanam dahyunam*' can only mean 'of the country or the people of the Aryas'. Thus the conclusion is reached that the word *dahyu* or *dasyu* is an Iranian word meaning a country or a people like Pars or Persia and Mada or Media.[25]

On these terms 'Dasa' and 'Dasyu' the Vedic Index mentions the views of some other scholars as follows: "Ludwig considers that in some passages Dasa is applied, in the

sense of 'enemy', to Aryan foes, but this is uncertain. Zimmer and Meyer think that Dasa originally meant 'enemy' in general, later developing in Iran into the name of the Dahae of the Caspian steppes. and in India into a designation of the aborigines. On the other hand, Hillebrandt argues that, as the Dasas and the Paṇis are mentioned together, they must be deemed to be closely related tribes, identifying the Paṇis with the Parnians and the Dasas of the Rigveda with the Dahae."[26]

We have serious doubts about Hillebrandt's identification of Paṇis with Parnians. Among all the tribes constituting the Asura people the Paṇis had clearly marked out characteristics and were well known to the Vedic Aryans as wealthy but miserly usurers and traders whom their seers have cursed to their hearts' content. However, we agree with his equation of the word 'Dasa' with the Iranian 'Dahae' of which Parni was a sub-tribe. According to Ghirshman the Parthians belonged to the Parni tribe which in its turn was a part of the Dahae, a great group of Scythian tribes who led a nomadic life in the steppe country between the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Aral.[27]

As we have seen earlier, the Scythians were themselves a mixed race, first mixed up with the Hūṇas and later with the Mongols and ultimately developing into an Alpino-Mongoloid race.

According to Nando Lal De, the Scytho-Mongolians came to be known as the Nagas and occupied the seven Pātālas as mentioned in the Puranic and Epic literatures. It would seem that, like the epithet Asura, the term '*Ahi*' became obsolete and was replaced by the word Naga. A number of scholars have expressed the belief that the Nagas were so denominated due to their being worshippers of the snakes. L.B. Keny, after having examined all the available literary and archaeological evidences has given it as his conclusion that the worship of the Nagas was a very late development and that in early times the Nagas, instead of

worshipping the snakes, have been shown in sculptures as worshipping the supreme deity Shiva or Mahadeva and themselves represented as wearing Naga-hoods. Therefore the derivation of the name of the Nagas is due to the fact that they had the serpent (Naga) as their national or tribal or racial emblem or 'lāṅchhana'.

As is well known, a number of dynasties either bearing the name 'Naga' or originating from the Nagas have ruled over large parts of India in the historical period. Even to-day there are several clans who call themselves Naga-Kshatriyas or Naga-Vaṁśīs. It would seem that after having lost their former high status the Nagas started worshipping their kingly ancestors, and as these ancestors wore Naga-hoods this symbol itself became the object of worship. In this they were joined by other people living in their midst. Thus appears to have originated in later ages the worship of the Serpent, which has misled some of our modern scholars into believing that the Nagas were so called because they were a Serpent-worshipping people.

Like the Asuras, from whom they had descended, the Nagas too were a gifted people who continued to be respected as such even up to the later historical periods. Keny writes: "According to Aśokāvadāna, Aśoka was very naughty in his early youth. So his father Bindusara sent him to Pingala Naga, to get a good education. This definitely shows the high culture of the Nagas. The Chinese traveller mentions a Naga palace as containing a number of books. The maidens of the Naga tribe were famous for their beauty, and not a few of the Epic heroes have taken them for their wives.

"Not only were the Nagas a civilized people, but they were a great maritime race since very early times. The civilization of Burmah and some Chinese countries is ascribed to the Naga people of Magadha. They seem to have had a very early trade with the Persian Gulf also. The Buddhist literature speaks of the Nagas of the Sea and the Nagas of the mountains."[28]

A. Banerji Shastri regards the Nagas "the spearhead and backbone of the Asura supremacy in India" and expresses the view that with their downfall ended the organised Asura supremacy in India. He further observes: "Once dispossessed the Nagas wandered over the whole of Northern India to the extreme north-east and then to the south. Airāvata (MBh. II. 360-66) was their king and pannaga (MBh. I. 2144-2126; III. 12400), Uraga (MBh. I. 2135), ajagara (MBh. III. 12390) and bhujanga (MBh. 12386; XII, 13835) their sub-groups. The Indus Valley, the Kurukṣetra on the river Ikṣumatī (MBh. I. 803), the Naimiṣa forest on the river Gomati (MBh. XII. 13800), the northern banks of the river Ganges (MBh. I. 199) and then into the fastnesses of the Niṣādha hilly tracts (MBh. VI. 246), each in turn harboured the Asura Nāga on his eastern march and significantly enough almost always by the river."[29]

According to A. Banerji Shastri, the Asura Nagas spread towards the east and ultimately found shelter in Assam, and that Nagpur in the south and Chhota Nagpur in south-east are reminiscent of their name. A number of other writers also hold similar views and even speak of the Nagas spreading themselves up to the extreme south and reaching Kerala, which is known for its Naga-worship. This India-wide presence of the Nagas should cause no surprise for the simple reason that as the authors of the Harappan Civilization, they must have spread along with it. By now it has become evident that this civilization did not remain confined to the Indus Valley. As archaeological investigations have extended towards the south and the east, the known area of this civilization has also been widening. About its extension on the western sea coast towards the south Mortimer Wheeler writes : "Recent search has extended the Indus Civilization far down the west coast, giving the people in the aggregate no less than 800 miles of seaboard, with what bearing upon their maritime activities remains to be explored. In Saurashtra (Kathiawad), extending

to the eastern side of the Gulf of Cambay, something like forty Harappan sites have been claimed and, though some of them may perhaps be more properly described as variant or marginal, there is now no doubt that at least a late phase of the civilization is widely represented there. The southernmost Indus site at present (1959) known is Bhagatrav on the Kim estuary nearly 500 miles south-east of Mohenjo-daro; others occur only a little further north at Mehgam and Telod on the estuary of the Narbadā."[30]

But Wheeler's observations about the spread of Harappan Civilization into the valley of the Gaṅgā are even more worthy of note: "At the same time in another direction recent discovery has likewise been little short of revolutionary. Until 1958 it was assumed that the Indus Civilization had failed to cross the divide between the Indus and the Jumna systems. In that year cursory digging at the village of Alamgirpur (at first announced as Ukhlina), in the Jumna basin 19 miles west of Meerut, 30 miles from Delhi and some 600 miles eastwards from Mohenjo-daro, revealed unmistakable Indus material. It cannot have stood alone, though a parallel report of the finding of Indus sherds much further down the Jumna at Kaushambi is unconfirmed and probably needs reconsideration. Further exploration of the Jumna-Ganges doab may well indeed provide before long a much-needed nexus between the civilization of the Indus and that—hitherto less studied—of the great northern plains. It begins to appear that, by a sort of pincer-movement, the Indus Civilization circumvented the Thar or Indian Desert (then doubtless appreciably smaller than to-day) on both sides so reached the formative regions of the classical civilizations of Hindustan in the north and centre of the subcontinent."[31]

So, in the opinion of Wheeler the Harappan Civilization, which was distinctively urban in character, had penetrated into the valley of the Gaṅgā. However, in his later work 'India and Pakistan' he appears to have modified, if not

completely abandoned, this view. He now writes that urbanization began in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Valley during the earlier half of the first millennium B.C.[32]

To accept this pronouncement of this great archaeologist would mean that for about fifteen hundred years, during which urban culture prevailed in the Indus Valley and Saurashtra and had even reached Rupar in the district of Ambala, the people of the Gaṅgā Valley were ignorant of urban life. This view runs counter not only to ancient traditional accounts but also to known trends of Indian history. All invading peoples, who had once established themselves in the Punjab, had never lost time in penetrating Madhyadeśa. The authors of the Harappan Civilization also could not have wasted much time in moving into the Gaṅgā-Yamunā mid-region. It was not necessary for them to be pressed forward by new invaders from behind, as the fertility of the Gaṅgā plains was too inviting to need any other compulsion. Besides, there is another factor which needs to be considered. Wheeler himself mentions the indiscriminate cutting of the Indus Valley forests as one of the causes of the decline of Harappan Civilization and also insists that the occupation of the Gaṅgā Valley was delayed due to its thick forests. It would seem strange that the people of the Indus Valley, when faced with declining rainfall and consequent scarcity of wood, did not think of migrating to the adjacent Gaṅgā plains. This is a point which still awaits to be proved by extensive archaeological investigation in the Gangetic plain. Meanwhile, we may continue to believe that the urbanization of these plains must have followed the founding of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. If surmises are as much permissible to non-archaeologists as to archaeologists, we might add that probably the cities of the western coastal regions were better built if only because of the wealth produced by international trade. It is well known that it was only when the international trade with the countries of the south-east Asia developed and the Gaṅgā became navigable

that the eastern Gangetic plain saw cities which rivalled, if not surpassed, the cities on the western coast. Even the importance of ancient Ujjayini was solely due to its having become a trade-centre for international commerce through the port of Bhṛgukachchha (Broach) or Barygaza as the Greeks pronounced it.

As stated by Wheeler himself, 'archaeology is in its infancy' in the Gaṅgā Valley. Even when it gets into full swing its functioning and outcome are bound to be inpeded by two factors. Unlike the Indus Valley, where miles upon miles of sand have acted as a preservative of the burned material, the valley of the Gaṅgā has had and still gets a heavy rainfall and therefore its damp climate is likely to have proved destructive of the ancient material. The second factor that stands in the way of the archaeologists' spade is that some of the ancient-most cities mentioned in the Puranas and the Epics still exist on their old sites and they cannot be transplanted elsewhere even in the interest of history. However, even when all that is possible has been done it may prove enough to light up the dark corners of the history of the Gaṅgā Valley, which holds the foremost place as the centre of Indian civilization.

Be that as it may, the archaeological discoveries, as far as they have already gone, support the traditional accounts about the presence of the Asura-Nagas in large parts of India. But what about the spread of the Asura civilization outside the Indian sub-continent? We have already stated that during their migration from Central Asia to *Pātāla* in the Indus Valley they had halted for shorter or longer periods in Iran, Afghanistan and Baluchistan and had built up settlements in those areas. As the entire people could not abandon one settlement after another they must have left behind masses of their kith and kin in these regions. But what were the contacts between the Indus Valley Civilization and countries like ancient Sumer and Egypt? So far as Sumer is concerned it has been established beyond doubt that the

Indus Valley people had contacts, particularly trade relations with it. Contacts with Egypt are also obvious but whether they were direct or through intermediaries is not clear. Basically, so much is common between Sumer and the Indus Valley Cultures that Waddell has opined that the Indus cities were merely colonies of the Sumerians. On the other hand, there are a number of other Indologists who hold that not only the Sumerian cities were founded by the people from the Indus Valley but even Egypt and some other lands, bordering the Mediterranean, owe their initial civilizing impetus to the colonists from India. Among this latter category, the late Rev. Father Heras holds the foremost place. Dr. Hall of the British Museum also is of the view that Indus Valley colonists entered Sumer either by land or by sea or by both. Buston and Rice hold similar views. We think that although on the basis of the existing evidence no final conclusion is possible, the latter view is more likely to prevail with progressive increase in our knowledge of the origins of civilization in these ancient countries. The reasons for this possibility seem to be obvious. Firstly, the earlier excavations conducted on the mounds of the important Indus cities had not reached the virgin soil, and thus we are not in a position to state definitely whether the Sumerian Civilization antedates the Indus Civilization. Secondly, the area covered by this civilization has so increasingly grown with the progress of excavations and exploration that Mortimer Wheeler has remarked that the Indus Civilization can thus claim "a larger area than any other of the known pre-classical civilizations". Thirdly, the tradition of the Sumerians itself asserts that their culture reached them in a fully developed form from the east. Finally, this Sumerian tradition is reinforced by that of the Phoenicians, the world-famous ancient traders who have been equated with Vedic Paṇis by a number of scholars, that they originally belonged to the lands near the Persian Gulf. Perhaps many surprises for Indologists lie buried in the lowest levels of the cities

of the Indus Valley and other ancient sites beyond. We end this chapter with the words of C. L. Fabri, who, referring to the claim of some of his 'respected Indian friends' to the effect that 'India is the cradle of civilization' has said :—

"Yet, perhaps, ultimately my Indian friends will not be found to be far removed from truth. For, after all, who knows what lies in the earth?"[33]

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Chapter
Four

The Early Aryans

Like the problem of the original home of the Indo-Europeans the subject of the Aryan entry into India has given rise to many controversies. There are Indian scholars who are firmly of the view that the Aryans were an indigenous people and that there is not a shred of evidence to show that they were colonists in this country. In our first two chapters we have tried to establish that Indian tradition itself supports the theory of the original home of Aryans in Central Asia and looks upon the same region as their Pitṛloka or the home of their ancestors.

Then there are questions concerning the time and the manner of Aryan entry into this country. These have also raised issues which are still being constantly discussed. On one extreme side are those who, in spite of the evidence thrown up by philology and archaeology, aver that the Aryans existed in India as far back as 25000 B.C. On the other side are ranged other scholars, who refuse to believe that the Aryans could have entered India before 1500 B.C. Long ago this approximate date was fixed by Max Muller, and now renowned archaeologists have lent their support to it. Mortimer Wheeler started the theory that the Aryans, under the leadership of Indra, destroyed the Harappan civilization in or about 1500 B.C. He was supported by Stuart Piggott. Now this approximate date has become an article of faith with some scholars, particularly with Wheeler's disciples. They have mixed up the problem of Aryan entry into India with the fall of the Harappan civilization. In this respect they have taken a number of propositions for granted. In their view the

Harappan Civilization was pre-Aryan and the Aryans at no stage of its development had anything to do with it except that their "barbarian hordes" came and destroyed it in 1500 B.C. under the leadership of Indra. We have examined in the previous chapter how the Asuras were the founders of the Harappan civilization and we propose to show in the course of this chapter that it attained its maturity after the occupation of the Indus Valley by the Ailas or the immediate descendants of Pururavas. As regards the destruction of the civilization in 1500 B.C. by the barbarous Aryan hordes we have to see whether this date can be supported by the results of recent excavations. We now proceed to discuss whether 1500 B.C. can be accepted as the time of the entry of the Aryans into India. In our view Max Muller's dating of Aryan entry in 1500 B.C. was provisional and at best a conjecture. It has nothing sacrosanct about it. It has been disputed by renowned scholars and even its exponent was willing to push it back by a few centuries. It is not founded on any archaeological findings and if it has been accepted by our archaeologists, it is because it suits their pet theories regarding the fall of the Harappan Civilization and the advent of the Aryans in India. Realising that the existing archaeological material does not help them, frantic efforts were made to discover something new on some chosen ancient sites. But to their misfortune discoveries did not take the course planned by them. Here is the ill concealed wailing by A. Ghosh, the ex-Director General of Archaeology, Government of India : "Wheeler advocated a planned progress from the known to the unknown—from the periphery to the centre. Since his departure a large number of research institutes and universities have come to the field, and the number is still on the increase. Each excavating body has naturally its own choice of sites, conditioned by many a factor. A unified and completely marshalled programme is no longer possible : the direct attacks are now from and towards many quarters and not merely from a spatial and temporal periphery. The results

have been correspondingly accelerated many times more than would have been possible with a cautious approach. The apparent effect of the results may seem to be an unorganised mass of knowledge, 'an untidy heap' to quote Wheeler. (Expedition, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 13-14).

The newly discovered material that contradicts the theories of our archaeologists has been called by A. Ghosh as 'non-conformist'. The word 'non-conformist' has so far been used in religious field, but, thanks to the disciples of Wheeler, we now find it being used in the field of the science of Archaeology. Naturally 'non-conformist' material has produced 'non-conformist' writers with the result that we have now in our midst a class of historians and even archaeologists who are looked down upon by Wheeler's disciples. However, the views of these non-conformist writers have now begun to find support at the hands of such renowned scholars as the Allchins who have, on the strength of very recent excavations, dated the collapse of Harappan Civilization in 1750 B.C. and have also dared to point out that even the initial impetus of the Harappan cities "may have been due to Indo-European speaking people".[1]

The intolerance of some of these archaeologists is even more in evidence in regard to the manner of Aryan entry into India. In the early period of Indological studies there were some scholars who were prepared to consider the possibility of the Aryans entering India in several waves. As early as in 1880 Hoernle "suggested that the evidence of the modern vernaculars of India and their predecessors justified the idea of there having been two Aryan invasions of India, one preceding the other, by tribes speaking different but closely connected languages".[2] Explaining his own attitude *vis-a-vis* Hoernle, George Grierson makes the following comment :— "I am not prepared myself to accept this theory of that great scholar in all its details, as it seems to me to be unnecessary to explain the difference of language by postulating two distinct invasions. It is easier to explain it by what is an undoubted

fact, — that the invasion, or if we prefer the term, the immigration, was a gradual process extending over a very long period of time. Whether we distinguish between the languages of two separate invasions, or between the languages of the earliest and of the latest immigrants, the result is the same."[3]

We have given above the views of two great philologists but some archaeologists still tend to ridicule the views of philologists. For example, at a seminar held in Poona in 1964 on the problems of Indian pre-history D.P. Agarwal referred to the pottery discovered in the Valley of Banas river in Rajasthan and happened to suggest that this pottery may be taken as belonging to the "first group of Aryans". At this Mr. A. Ghosh is reported to have remarked that "this old theory of the linguists had been revived by the present day archaeologists hypothetically." In this connection we reproduce below another extract in the same vein from A. Ghosh :—"The discovery of the Harappan culture dramatically added a brilliant chapter to Indian archaeology and attracted wide attention. At home, outside the circle of practising archaeologists, much that is fanciful has been written, and continues to be written, about its origin, chronology and affiliation encouraged by regrettable non-decipherment of the Indus Script."[4]

A. Ghosh seems to dismiss as fanciful the opinions of those outside the charmed "circle of practising archaeologists" on the "origin, chronology and affiliations "of the Harappan culture. It is rather hard to concede that the archaeologist who digs up dead material should be considered the only person competent to put life into it. The cause of research is too sacred to be jeopardised by pre-conceived notions, however ardently held by scholars. Problems relating to the pre-history and proto-history of India can be solved if light is allowed to be shed on them not only by archaeologists but also by votaries of other branches of knowledge, not excluding those who have specialised in Vedic and Puranic literature. I would commend an extract from

Dr. A.D. Pusalker on the comparative value of the archaeological and literary sources because he strikes the right note of caution :—"Archaeologists like Wheeler, Piggott and Gordon treat the literary evidence with distrust. Woolley attaches little importance to literary evidence when not supported by archaeological data, while Wheeler considers the search for literary evidence in support of archaeological data as a great risk. According to Piggott the literary and philological evidence is a dangerous ground full of quick sands and pitfalls which have too often trapped the unwary and not infrequently the would be wary too. While frankly confessing that 'almost all interpretation of the archaeological materials of the early times is in fact speculative', Gordon condemns literary evidence by stating that the major portion of the Mahabharata and the Puranas 'provides little except fuel for the blaze of controversy'. Kosambi goes to the length of stating that 'archaeology alone can supply any reliable data for the study of ancient culture'." As against this encomium on archaeology may be considered the view of Srinivasachari who observes :—"Archaeological material can at best furnish only what may constitute the dry bones of history, only such a sequence of occurrence and priority and posteriority in point of time and the general condition of the civilization of the people whose handiwork is subjected to examination." Another eminent historian, R.C. Majumdar, says : "The archaeologist is too much obsessed with outward manifestations, as a purely literary man is likely to be too much occupied with the inner conception of man. A true historian must take cognizance of both and collect his data after a proper and critical analysis, from archaeological as well as literary evidence; he can ignore either only at his peril." Majumdar points out the limitations of archaeological evidence and criticises both the extreme views taking either archaeological evidence or literary evidence as the only evidence to the exclusion of the other. The right approach is "to supply the necessary corrective to both these extreme

views and draw up the picture of ancient India after a proper valuation of all available evidence. The exclusion of literary evidence would mean the restriction of culture only to the external manifestation of man's activities, ignoring the mental and moral make-up."[5] H.D. Sankalia, an eminent archaeologist and scholar, expresses a similar view when he says :—"In a country like India which has got a very, very ancient tradition preserved in its Puranas, the two epics, and the Vedic literature, one should not overlook such possibilities, even though a large number of scholars would regard the Puranas and the epics as purely imaginary. I think that these works, however much inflated, do contain an element of truth, and particularly the lists of various ruling dynasties. They may be inflated, but names of the dynasties and other essentials should be true and approximate to truth. It is in this way that we can give some form to the Puranic dynasties, whereas our potteries may be given some individuality."[6]

Of all their finds the archaeologists attach greatest importance to pots discovered by them as they "think of pottery as an index of culture" because "pottery is so specialised in fabric as well as in form that it does represent a particular cultural trait and/or a group of people or tribe."[7] Now let us see what light is thrown on the problem of the Aryan entry into India by various groups of potteries recently discovered outside the Valley of the Indus. Of these the most important sites are those of Ahāṛ (Banas Valley, Rajasthan) and Nāvḍātolī (on the Narmada, Madhya Pradesh), not to mention Nevāsā and Prakash (Maharashtra). Sankalia who himself was in charge of the excavations at Nāvḍātolī and Maheshwar and who has studied the finds of Ahāṛ, dates both of them in 1800 B.C. About the first dwellers of Nāvḍātolī he observes that "probably they were a people from Iran" and "might be a branch of the Aryans". Eran, another site (Saugor, Madhya Pradesh) bears a close resemblance to Nāvḍātolī and Carbon 14 dating places it in about 1800 B.C. Similarly in the Valley of the Ganga Ochre-washed ware and hoards of copper have

been discovered. They too have posed problems for historians but the general view appears to be that they should be dated in or about 2000 B.C. About the Copper-hoards A. Ghosh has remarked that "it now seems possible that the hoards represent the relics of the late Harappans", and may be (according to some scholars) associated with the Aryans.[8]

The upshot of all this is that the material unearthed by archaeologists shows that a number of Aryan tribes had entered India sometime about 2000 B.C.

It must be said to the credit of Mortimer Wheeler that he, unlike his disciples, tries to keep an open mind and modifies his views when faced with fresh material. Confronted with the discovery of the Painted Grey Ware at Rupar and other sites of the Gaṅgā Valley he is obliged to remark:— "At the upper limit of the dating, a clear archaeological gap has been established between the end of the Indus Civilization (c. 1500 B.C.) and the beginning of the P.G. Ware at Rupar and other sites in N.W. India. Nevertheless, if as archaeologists we must be for ever tracing the steam engine back to the tea-kettle, we postulate a link, however tenuous, with Baluchistan, where the bowls from the secondary burials at Shahi Tump seem to have a certain ancestral affinity with the Ganges material, and the Shahi Tump burials post-dated the Indus Civilization at that spot. Certainly the sudden appearance of the high-class P.G. Fabric in the Ganges basin, suggests or even proves, that its technique had already been perfected elsewhere. If the Aryans must be dragged into this picture, it is possible to suppose that the P.G. Ware may represent the second phase of their invasion of India, when, from the Punjab, they entered and Aryanised the middle country of the Ganges—Jumna doab after picking up ideas and doubtless craftsmen in the Indus Valley and the Baluch borderland."[9]

We may ignore the note of irritation in the above remarks, but we cannot help reminding Wheeler that it was he who had set the fashion of dragging the Aryans "into this picture".

However, thanks to the discovery of the P.G. Ware we may now be permitted to believe that along with the technique of making high class pottery the Aryans had picked up some other items of civilization before they entered India. Our own view is that every wave of invading Aryans came to India through Iran acquiring the culture that prevailed there at the time. Be that as it may, for our present purpose it is immaterial whether they acquired the technique of the P.G. Ware from the Iranians or the Baluchis. What is more, material is Dr. Wheeler's admission, however grudgingly made, that this P.G. Ware "may represent the second phase of their invasion of India". In other words Wheeler concedes the possibility of the Aryans entering India in more waves than one and impliedly, even before 1500 B.C. We have seen that the recent archaeological discoveries in India have already pushed back the date to 2000 B.C. We now turn to discoveries elsewhere.

It is a well-established fact that the Hittites, an Indo-European people, had reached Anatolia in or about 2000 B.C. The Kassites, who conquered Babylonia in 1700 B.C. must have reached the Iranian plateau about the same time. The Aryan rulers of the Mitannis, who spoke a language akin to the Vedic, must have settled by the side of the Hittites not much later. All this definitely shows that Iran and the countries on its west extending up to the Mediterranean coast had received Aryan settlers round about 2000 B.C. In a paper entitled "The appearance of the Indo-Europeans and the Indo-Aryans in Anatolea" read in the International Conference on Central Asia held at New Delhi (1969), Dr. Kewal Balkan has stated :—

> The appearance of the Indo-Aryans in the near East has to be connected with the immigration of Iranians to South western Iran, and Indians to India. From a treaty concluded between Hittites and Mitanniens we know that the rulers of Mitanni worshipped Indo-Aryan deities such as Indra, Mitra, Varuna and the Nasatya twins. On the other

hand, as is well known these deities appear with the same names in Vedic hymns. It is not yet proved whether the deity Agni occurring in Hittite rituals is identical with Agni, the Indian Firegod. The archive of Bogazkoy disclosed the clue which explains the superiority of Indo-Aryans over other ethnical groups in the area into which they immigrated. A very well preserved cuneiform text in Hittite, consisting of four tablets, reveal the instruction of a certain KIKKULI of the land of Mitanni on the training and acclimatization of horses. The horses were being properly trained to be harnessed to war chariots used in Hittite army. Hence we must draw the conclusion that the Indian clan, advancing westwards brought with them their special knowledge of horse-breeding, war chariots and that it was from them that the art was learnt by the peoples of Western Asia.

R. Ghirshman, the reputed excavator of Sūsā, places the first entry of the Indo-Europeans "towards the end of third millennium B.C". It would thus be seen that the date (2000 B.C.) for the arrival of the Vedic tribes in India arrived at by Indian archaeologists on the basis of their excavations coincides with Ghirshman's date (the end of the third millennium B.C.) of the occupation of Arachosia by the Vedic Aryans. In his monograph entitled "Iran" while discussing the second invasion of Iran by the peoples of the Indo-European stock he says :— "The eastern branch of these Iranians, coming from the Transoxiana, was unable to spread to the south of the Hindukush, since all the districts of Arachosia as well as the Punjab were already in the hands of the sister branch of the Aryans, the future Indians, who had settled there at the time of the earlier Indo-Iranian invasion. The new arrivals were, therefore, forced to turn west towards the plateau, along the natural route leading from Bactria into the heart of Iran. This land of Iran was less favoured than India, being 'rich only in square miles' and the Iranians never abandoned the idea of re-taking Arachosia. They bitterly contested the pro-

vince with the Vedic tribes in the course of a long struggle that finally ended in the Iranization of the disputed territory."[10]

This is evidence enough to prove that the Vedic Aryans were in possession of an extensive territory extending from Hindukush to the land of the five rivers. This also shows that formerly all the land south and south-east of the Hindukush mountain was considered a part of India. It is well known that Seleucus Nikator had ceded this tract to Chandragupta Maurya. Kalidasa, in his "Raghuvaṁśa" describes Raghu defeating the Hūṇas on the banks of the river Oxus.

Those Indian scholars who look upon the Aryans as an indigenous people, would have better justification for their theory if they defined the ancient boundaries of their motherland so as to include lands up to Central Asia. Although Mortimer Wheeler would not allow us to cross the Hindukush to claim new lands even for ancient Indians he has been more liberal in his book "Early India and Pakistan" than some of our own scholars. He defines ancient India as "the whole sub-continent south of the Himalayas and Hindukush, east of the Helmand Desert, and west of the Chin Hills".[11]

Vincent Smith is even more generous. In his "Early History of India" he has expressed the view that "the observation of Pliny that numerous authors include in India the four Satrapies of Gedrosia, Arachosia, Aria and Paropanisadae must have been based on the fact that at some period previous to A.D. 77 when his book was published those four provinces were actually reckoned as part of India."[12]

Our own view has been set forth in our first two chapters that in the earliest times the Aryans inhabited all the lands included in the Puranic Uttarakuru Varṣa and Ketumāla Varṣa. This view does not stand entirely unsupported. Dr. Buddha Prakash also holds that "the region from the Sarasvati up to the sea, encompassing the Caspian and the Aral was the cradle-land of the Indo-Iranian peoples".[13]

We have already mentioned R. Ghirshman's view that Iran

had been invaded twice by the Aryans with a gap of about a thousand years between the first and the second invasion. So far as India is concerned a careful study of the traditional history embodied in Vedic and Puranic literatures lends credence to the theory that apart from the invasion by the Asuras at least three Aryan invasions are discernible. At any rate the 'one invasion' theory seems untenable. India is a vast country of continental proportions, and it cannot have been possible, for any people howsoever numerous, to conquer it in one invasion and to stamp it with their own culture and language for more than three thousand years. Leaving aside the invasions of several uncivilized races such as Scythians and Hūṇas, we may take up for comparison the entry of Muslims into India. The first invasion by the Arabs took place in 712 A.D. and the last by the Mughals in 1526 A.D. under Babur. All the Muslim entrants were civilized and fanatical propagandists of their way of life, and yet even with a thousand years of vigorous rule they could not achieve what Aryans are supposed to have brought about by one single invasion. Discussing the new influence that reached the Narmada, Sankalia observes : "I have already said on several occasions in lectures in Bombay as well as elsewhere, that evidence from Maheshwar and Navdatoli in the shape of particular pottery vessels,— the various vessels with footed-stands called "goblets" and the bowl with a channel spout resemble so much similar vessels from Iran, that one has got to postulate some kind of connection between Eastern Iran or Western Asia and Central India. In this context the Lustrous Red Ware from Rangpur with similar goblets gains added significance. I believe that the influences which spread to the Narmada Valley might have continued in wave after wave after the earlier waves reached Narmada. Other waves followed with slightly different pottery traditions and it is this that we find at Rangpur and other sites in Saurashtra like Somnath and elsewhere, and as far down at Piklihal in the Karnatak, along with the ground

stone axes according to Allchin."[14]

This 'wave after wave' theory goes to support Grierson's view based on philological grounds already quoted by us. Whether there were two Aryan invasions (Hoernle) or the Aryans came in wave after wave the fact remains that the process lasted long enough to enable them to Aryanise at least culturally a large part of the sub-continent. As the main purpose of our labour is to see if the tradition can stand the test of modern research we now proceed with our account of the Early Aryans.

According to both the Vedic and Puranic tradition the history of the Indo-Aryans begins with Manu Vaivasvata. We have already quoted two Rgvedic verses to the effect that Indra and god Agni helped him to gain supremacy over the Dasas. A third verse (RV. v; 45; 6) names Viśiśipra as the Dasa chief whom he defeated. He is regarded not only as their ancestor by all ancient ruling dynasties but is also considered the fountain-head of legal, political and social tenets which governed the conduct of millions of people for countless centuries. To the authors of the Vedic Index Manu may be a mythical figure but many Indians who hold to their traditions would require unchallengeable evidence before ceasing to look upon him as a great historical personage. Says P.L. Bhargava :— "That there was a huge flood in pre-historic times in some part of the then known world is also proved by Semitic sources, for the name of the person who escaped this disaster according to them is Noah or more correctly Nuh, as in Arabic, which is clearly a contracted form of Manuh, the nominative form of Manu. The tradition of the coming of Aryans to India under leadership of Manu is further supported by the Puranic genealogies which trace the origin of all the Aryan ruling families from Manu. There is nothing surprising in this, for the descendants of the first Aryan king must naturally have multiplied and founded several ruling families. In fact there is nothing more mythical about the Vedic Manu than about the Biblical Abraham, and

if Abraham can be regarded as a historical person there is no reason why Manu should not be regarded so."[15]

In chapter II we have, on the strength of a passage in Iranian Bundehishna, as interpreted by Herzfeld, already located the home of Yama (Yima) and of Manu in Khvarizm or Khiva in Central Asia. Bhargava has tried to place the Mānavas in the vicinity of the river Indus on the ground that when they later settled in Kosala they carried the names of two rivers, Gomati and Sarayu, from this region. He has rightly identified the Gomati with the Gomal but as for Sarayu he admits that "unfortunately it is not possible to identify the river, perhaps because it has changed name, as did several others".

Bhargava did not think of equating Sarayu with the Avestic '*Haroyu*', an identification acceptable to many scholars, because he was not prepared to go beyond the Indus to search for the original home of the Aryans. The southward movement of the Aryans from Khvarizm in Central Asia to Herat in the Valley of *Haroyu* (now known as Harirūd) via Merv is almost convincingly traceable from the Avestic description of the sixteen 'good lands' created by Ahura Mazda. As regards the river Gomati it too would lie on their route, as the Gomal pass is one of the easiest passages to India from the side of Iran and Afghanistan. But between valleys of the Harirud aud Gomati there are other valleys which were fertile and fit for Aryan settlements. The route from Herat (in the *Haroyu* Valley) directly leads to Seistan in the valley of Helmand (Iranian *Haetumant* and Indian *Setumant*). This, in its turn, leads to the valley of *Harahvaitī* now known as Arghandab, a tributary of the Helmand and close to Kandahar, from which routes bifurcate giving entrance both into the Panjab and into Sindh. It may be recalled that the valleys of *Haroyu* (Herat), *Haetumant* (Seistan) and *Harahvaitī* (Kandahar) figure in the Avesta as 'good lands' Nos. 6, 11 and 10 created by Ahura Mazda for the settlement of Aryans.

We have already stated that *Harahvaitī* (Arghandab) is a tributary of the river *Haetumant* or Helmand. This combined tract of Seistan (Ghazni) and Kandahar seems to have been the final halting place of the Indo-Aryans before being compelled to abandon it and to turn towards India. As we have already observed, *Harahvaiti* has been identified with Sarasvati by a number of scholars led by Zimmer. Still, the question remains whether the river Sarasvati, repeatedly mentioned in Rigveda, is the Sarasvati in the region of Kurukshetra or whether it refers to the river in Iran but pronounced as *Harahvaiti* by the Iranians.

The word 'Sarasvati' is itself significant as it means a river 'abounding in lakes'. It seems highly probable that when the Mānavas migrated from the banks of the Sarasvati in Iran and settled in Brahmavarta, they named the most important river of their new home after the river of their former homeland. Luckily Kunhan Raja has discussed the problem of the river Sarasvati in great detail. Referring to two Ṛgvedic verses (X-17/8-9) he says that Sarasvati is "essentially a goddess living in the other world along with departed forefathers of the people", and adds: "Sarasvati is another river that has been described very prominently in the Rigveda. The river Sindhu is just mentioned in many places, and in the song about the rivers, there is a description of the river in a few verses. But in the case of the river Sarasvati, there are many songs in the Rigveda. No one can deny that the Sarasvati is the most important river in the Rigveda. But my fear is that the river was known to the people only in tradition, as a past memory of glory. If the banks of the Sarasvati had been the real centre of Vedic culture, as is indicated by the prominence given to that river in the Rigveda, then one may wonder why the river Sindhu, which is far away to the west, has come next in importance after the Sarasvati. Yamuna (Jamna) and Shutudri (Satlej) should have been given that importance, being in the region nearest to the Sarasvati. If prominence in description is not

a factor in deciding the relative importance of the regions, where the Vedic culture had been most strongly rooted, then Sarasvati cannot be accepted as the centre of Vedic culture just because of the prominence given to it in the descriptions. My own view is that prominence to the Sarasvati is due to its importance in tradition and that the prominence given to the Sindhu is due to the importance of the Sindhu region as the centre of culture at that time. Because the Sindhu was known to the people as a river, they sang about the river as a phenomenon of Nature. Because Sarasvati was known to the people only as a past memory and not as a fact of experience in their life, that river was described as a goddess also, its feature as a phenomenon of Nature being retained."[16]

The question naturally arises that if "Sarasvati was known to the people only as a past memory" then with which region is this "past memory" connected. In view of the connection of Sarasvati with the Pitṛs ("the departed forefathers of the people") as shown by the Rigvedic verses mentioned above, our unhesitating answer should be that this past memory of the Rigvedic people is about eastern Iran where the river Sarasvati was called *Harahvaitī* and still flows as Arghandab.

Thus it seems probable that after Manu parted from his brother Yima, the Mānavas first settled in the region of Herat, then in Seistan and finally near Kandahar. Interestingly enough, this theory based on traditional lore is supported by Archaeological excavations conducted at the ancient site of Mundigak now situated on a dry tributary of the Arghandab river near Kandahar. A French writer Jean Marie Casal states: "Let us point out another link between Mundigak and the Harappan Civilization, a head of white calcaire, the only example of stone sculpture ever found on Afghan soil. It is not without interest to point out the treatment of the hair in a hand the two ends of which fall on the neck, just as in the figure of the Priest—King at Mohenjodaro." (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles—Lettres—Paris—1960).

MAP 4. EXPANSION OF ĀRYAN CULTURE IN INDIA

Bridget and Raymond Allchin have made the following observations on the finds at Mundigak : "The whole impression of the Mundigak period I assemblage is of closer proximity to sites of Iran, and reveals a greater diversity of crafts, etc., than the sites of Baluchistan. Thus there is reason to infer that the first waves of influence felt in north and central Baluchistan followed the ancient trade route across southern Afghanistan and the plain of Kandahar." As regards the Ailas, the descendants of Manu's daughter Ila, we feel it should be possible to locate their first home in Bactria with even greater confidence. The Ramayana of Valmiki (*Uttara-kāṇḍa*, chapter 87) gives a long description of the birth of Pururavas, the son of Budha and Ilā and places the event in the Vāhlika region which is no other than Iranian Balkh and Greek Bactria.

Thus while we initially locate the Mānavas and the Ailas in the Herat and Bactrian regions respectively and Bhargava starts them from the Indus and the Sarasvati the Puranas have taken a much longer jump and placed Manu in Ayodhyā and Pururavas in Pratisthana near Allahabad. Correcting this Puranic error Bhargava writes : "The Aikshvākus ruled in the country of Kosala in later times, and so the Puranic editors have located their earlier ancestors in Ayodhya, the most ancient city of Kosala. The Pauravas ruled in the country of Vatsa in later times, and so the Puranic editors have located their earliest ancestors, Sudyumna and Pururavas, in Pratishthana, an ancient city of the Vatsa country. The Haihaya yādavas, another dynasty descended from Sudyumna and Pururavas, ruled in Avantī in later times, and the Puranic editors have, therefore, located their remotest ancestors in Māhishmatī, the most ancient city of that region. That the location of the early kings of these dynasties in Ayodhya, Pratishthana, and Māhishmatī is a mistake, is fully proved by the older records preserved in the Puranas and the *Mahabharata*, which entirely agree with Vedic evidence...."[17]

At this stage we would like to emphasise an important

feature concerning the expansion of the early Aryans in India. The earliest Aryans, whether they entered the southern Asiatic lands by crossing the Caucasus or the river Oxus, are first found occupying the northern mountainous regions leaving the civilized people of the southern river valleys undisturbed for a considerable period. This may have been due to their preference for higher hilly tracts on climatic grounds or availability of pasture for their cattle or effective defence-armour and organisation of the inhabitants of the peoples of the lower lands. These mountain-tracts extend from the hills of Assam to the Mediterranean coast, and it is reasonable to suppose that if the Early Aryans were in occupation of hills from the Hindukush to Anatolia on the West they could have as well first occupied the hills to the east from Hindukush to Bihar. Traditional accounts confirm this. Indra is said to have killed Vṛtra and some other Asura chiefs in hilly tracts. But the most significant feature of the Early Aryan expansion in India is that the cities like Ayodhya, Mithilā and Vaiśālī, which had been founded by the Mānavas, are not situated in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab but more or less close to the foothills of Nepal. Even Brahmāvarta, lying between the Sarasvati and Dṛṣadvatī, is close to Himalayan foothills. This is why we hear of Uttra Pāñchāla and Dakṣiṇa Pāñchāla and of Uttar Kosala and Dakṣiṇa Kosala. Even in Bihar the expansion was from Mithila and Vaiśālī in the north to Magadha in the South. D.D. Kosambi, in his history of ancient India entitled "The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline" is of the view that the Gangetic Valley remained thinly populated and un-Aryan as its thick forests could not have been cleared for settlement and the land ploughed until iron axe and heavy plough came into vogue. But even he has to admit that "the main Aryan settlements, therefore, extended eastwards in a chain, a thin line along the Himalayan foothills to southern Nepal and then swung south through the Champaran district of Bihar to the great river."[18]

All the ancient literature of India agree that Manu was the first Aryan king of India. Our next task should be to identify the region which Manu or one of his near descendants finally occupied after his entry into India, across the foot-hills of northern Panjab and Kashmir. Such a region could only be Brahmavarta. The *Manusmṛti*, the original authorship of which has been attributed to Manu says that Brahmavarta is the "land created by the gods" and assigns the first place to it among the holy regions of India,[19] It lies at the foot of the Himalayas. In the other direction it almost touches the extensive Thar desert. Between the Himalayas and the desert it takes the shape of a bottle-neck. It also happens to be the door-way between the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges. It is from here that both the valleys can be controlled. History is witness to the fact that an invading people, who had succeeded in establishing themselves in the strategically situated Brahmavarta, had moulded the destinies of India for centuries. It is not surprising that this observation should be supported by Puranic accounts of the expansion of the Mānavas.

We learn from the Puranas that the kingdoms of Kosala, Videha and Vaiśālī were founded by the direct descendants of Manu. Only a reference to the founding of Videha has survived in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[20] It says that Videgha Māthava accompanied by his priest Gotama carried the sacred fire from the banks of the Sarasvati to the banks of the river Sadānīrā (the modern Gandak) and established himself as the first ruler of the Videhan kingdom. It would not be a bad guess to say that two other descendants of Manu must have started from Brahmavarta as Videgha did, when the Kośala and Vaiśālī realms came into existence with their capitals at Ayodhyā and Viśālā. Of course, the founding of the Kośala kingdom must have preceded and that of Vaiśālī followed the birth of the Videhan dynasty. It is needless to add that all the three regions lay either in the Himalayan foot-hills or close to them. They then expanded gradually

towards the Ganga, the Kośalas reaching it at the time of their famous king Bhagiratha.

It is always natural for the first colonists to keep in touch with their former home-lands. It would be important to know whether Manu himself had crossed the Indus or whether it was one of his immediate descendants who settled in Brahmavarta. Nariṣyanta, one of the sons of Manu, is mentioned in the Puranas as the progenitor of the *Ś*akas. This would place the home of Manu and Nariṣyanta in some region of Iran. Manu's grandson Vikukshi had many sons some of whom are said to have been rulers of regions north of Meru i.e. in Central Asia. However, as the rest of his sons became rulers of regions in India we can say that Vikukshi's sons had definitely settled in India. Perhaps the first settler was Vikukshi's son and successor Kākutstha who is said to have assisted Indra in one of the Devasura wars, named Āḍīvaka by the Puranas. It may be that as a result of Indra's success in this war Kākutstha received territories in India and became the first Aryan ruler somewhere on the east of the Indus. This surmise finds support in the statements in the Puranas that the descendants of Manu came to be called Kākutsthas after him. Eleven steps below Manu is Kuvalāśva who is described as having killed Dhundhu in the desert which gave him the name Dhundhumāra. This does not seem to have been an act of conquest but a mere raid for a specific purpose at the request of Ṛṣi Uttanka. Seven steps below Kākutstha in the Mānava genealogy is Māndhātṛ who made extensive conquests. But before we deal with his career of conquests we must turn to the early Ailas, descended from Manu's daughter Ilā.

Placing his reliance on the Puranic accounts, F.E. Pargiter makes Pururavas the ruler of Pratiṣṭhāna and then traces the Aila expansion towards the north in the upper Ganga Valley. As the Indus Valley sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro had not been excavated when he wrote his well-known work, "The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", he could only think of

resistance to Aryan penetration from the ancestors of the present-day aboriginal tribes. Moreover, he had propounded the theory that only the Ailas were Aryans and that they did not enter India from beyond the Indus. He also held that the Aila expansion took place from east to west. He was misled by the Puranic error into the belief that the initial capital of Pururavas was at Pratisthana near Allahabad. The fact is that the word 'Pratiṣṭhāna' merely means a 'settlement' and there could be many Pratiṣṭhānas. There is a second well-known Pratiṣṭhāna on the Godavari, which exists even now and is known as Paithan. There could have been a third one nearer Bactria, the home province of Pururavas. Greek writers Strabo and Pliny have mentioned a place in the vicinity of Kabul under the name of 'Ortospana'. Alexander Cunningham in his famous work "The Ancient Geography of India" writes :— "In some copies of Pliny the name is written *Orthospanum*, which, with a slight alteration to *Orthostana*, as suggested by H.H. Wilson, is most probably the Sanskrit *Urddhasthana*...."[21] R.G. Bhandarkar rejects this identification as "purely aimless and conjectural" and suggests 'Paraśu-Sthāna' or "the country of the Paraśus" on the basis of the Chinese name 'Po-li-shi-sa-tang-na'. However, this too, although aimful, is conjectural. If there is no way other than conjectures to identifying Ortospana, 'Pratiṣṭhana' can be as good an alternative as Urdhasthana or Parasusthana. In the advance of the Ailas from Bactria towards the south Kabul the Ortospana of Pliny is a natural halting place. We are indeed probing for truth in a realm of conjectures and to that extent we are dependent on future research. However, pursuing the line of reasoning, based on Puranic and Vedic evidence, which has led us to identify Indra and Devaloka, we can perhaps hazard the conjecture, with good reason, that the initial capital of Pururavas cannot have been far from Bactria, because of his close connections with Indra and the Devaloka. It is by Indra's intervention that the Gandharvas gave him Urvashi. Not only did he get his wife from the

Gandharvas but also his sacrificial fire. We are also told that he became one with the Gandharvas after his death.

Āyu was the son and successor of Pururavas. The Puranas say that he married the daughter of the Daitya Svarbhānu. Āyu's son was Nahuṣa. Like his grandfather Pururavas he too is mentioned in the Rigveda. He was a great fire-worshipper and the god Agni is said to have conferred upon him the power to tax his subjects (RV. VII-6-5 and I-31-11). The tribe named after him is said to have been rich in horses. That Nahuṣa himself did not enter India is manifest from the fact, already referred to, that he had attained Indrahood in Devaloka for a brief period.

The son of Nahuṣa was the famous king Yayāti also referred to in the Rigveda which connects him with the river Sarasvati. According to a verse in the Rigveda (RV. VII-96), Sarasvati "granted milk and ghee" to the son of Nahuṣa. It appears that Yayati, the son of Nahuṣa, drove out the remnant of the Mānavas from Arachosia and occupied the valley of *Harahvaiti* or Arghandab.

The Puranas give long accounts of Yayati's valour, sacrifices, sensuousness and his ultimate disgust with the pleasures of the senses. However, what strikes us as most significant is his marriage with Śarmiṣṭhā, the daughter of the Asura king Vṛṣaparvā and Devayani, the daughter of Shukracharya, the priest of Vṛṣaparvā. It is specifically mentioned that Yayati's kingdom bordered on that of Vṛṣaparvā, where he happened to meet Devayani. These marriages appear to have made history as, from these unions he came to have five sons named Yadu and Turvasu from Devayani, and Druhyu, Anu and Puru from Śarmiṣṭhā. Yayati divided his territories extending from Arghanbad in Iran to Yamuna, among these five sons. As a result five independent kingdoms must have come into existence.

It is evident that these kingdoms must have included a large portion of the area covered by the Harappan civilization. As we have already observed in the previous chapter the

Asuras were in possession of the Indus Valley and the contiguous territories. Was then Vṛṣaparvā, called an Asura by the Puranas, the master of the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa ? The accounts given by the Puranas of Yayati's marriages deserve to be carefully analysed. Here is the Puranic account in the words of V. S. Sukthankar :—"One day when Devayani and Śarmiṣṭhā, Vṛṣaparvan's daughter, are having a bath in a neighbouring river, Indra tosses their clothes about, which had been left by the girls on the river bank, so that Śarmiṣṭhā by mistake took up the dress of Devayani. There ensues a hefty quarrel between the girls, and Śarmiṣṭhā throws her rival into a dry well overgrown with grass. And there she remains until she is seen and pulled out of the well by the gallant king Yayati, who with the approval of her father, Shukra, marries her. Previously, as a recompense for her overbearing conduct towards Devayani, Śarmiṣṭhā had become Devayani's slave. She now accompanies Devayani to the capital of Yayati and the three people live in happiness for some time. Yayati has been warned beforehand by Shukra that he must on no account call Śarmiṣṭhā on to his bed. But Śarmiṣṭhā prevails upon the soft hearted and indulgent Yayati, by dint of importunity and feminine logic to act so that her menstrual period will not be wasted, "for the husband of one's friend is the same as one's own husband". Yayati is constrained to admit the logic and begets on her secretly three sons, while Devayani has only two. Devayani learns the truth of the whole affair one day by accident, and goes in a huff to her father, complaining bitterly of the perfidy of her husband. The enraged Shukra curses Yayati that he would instantly suffer the effects of premature decrepitude, and so it happens. He relents, however, and adds that Yayati might transfer his premature old age at will to any one who is willing to take it on in his stead. Accordingly Yayati exchanged his decrepitude for the youth of his youngest son, Puru, son of Śarmiṣṭhā, who was the only one of his five sons willing to take on his old age and to whom he subsequently

handed over his vast kingdom as a reward for his filial affection.

"In this version of the Yayati legend, the Bhargavi Devayani has it all her own way and poor Śarmiṣṭhā has been thrust in the background except in the finale, which raises Śarmiṣṭhā's youngest son to the throne and the tables are turned on Devayani. In spite of the Yayātyupākhyāna, Indian tradition honours Śarmiṣṭhā as the pattern of a wife most honoured by her husband; for in Kalidasa's famous drama, when Kāśyapa gives his parting blessing to his beloved daughter, Shakuntala, he could think of no better boon than to wish that she might be like Śarmiṣṭhā :

Yayāter iva Śarmiṣṭhā bhartur bahumatā bhava.

"Be thou highly honoured of thy husband, as was Śarmiṣṭhā of Yayati."[22]

This story of Yayati's marriages, given by almost all the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* appears to have in it something more than meets the eye. Howsoever powerful Shukracharya may have been, it is difficult to believe that a king's daughter could have accompanied a priest's daughter to her husband's home as her serving maid. It appears far more possible that Yayati, a mighty conqueror, defeated Vṛṣaparvā and took away his daughter but also married Devayani to secure the influential priest's support to consolidate his hold on the newly conquered territory. It is noteworthy that the Bhārgavas, who had all along been the reputed priests of the Asuras, ultimately became devout Deva-worshippers and good Vedic Brahmins.

Thus the story of Yayati's marriage appears to be the story of the conquest of the Indus Valley by the Ailas. But the story has something more to tell. It definitely asserts that Śarmiṣṭhā's son Puru became Yayati's favourite and ultimately his principal successor. It appears that Yayati, with a view to appeasing the Asuras of the Indus Valley, entrusted to the care of Puru, born of an Asura mother, his newly conquered territories. Thus the Ailas or the Aryans of the Lunar dynasty

appear to have acquired the Indus Valley more by compromise than by bloody conquest. Lest this theory of the Aryan conquest of the Indus Valley of the Asuras should be dismissed as fantastic, we give below the opinion of D.H. Gordon who reaches an analogous conclusion on the point of compromise between the Harappans and the Aryans from the archaeologists' point of view. He writes:— "The period that follows the extinction of the peasant farming communities of Baluchistan and of the Harappa civilization is a very blank one. We have the Jhukar people who occupied three at least of the town-sites in Sind but not Mohenjo-daro itself. The accounts of the Aryan invasions in the *Rigveda* argue for two important things, compromises with the Harappans and dissensions among the invaders. At this point one's arguments, in default of exact information, are bound to become somewhat conjectural, but they are linked with ascertained facts and do not, one hopes, take off into those airy realms of fantasy where all material evidence is disregarded."[23] Although the date of the 'Cemetery H' culture at the site of Harappa is uncertain, yet even if this 'Cemetery H' is of a much later date it is significant that a cultural fusion took place between the Harappans and the Aryans as hinted by the Allchins.[24] This only goes to show that the Harappan cultural influence was so powerful that it compelled every Aryan tribe that settled there to effect a compromise with it.

Narayan Tripathi thinks that the Ailas were a mixed race and says : "Ilā's consort Buddha was the illegitimate son of Soma, the emperor over the Brāhmaṇas of the North, by Tārā, an abducted lady of the Aṅgiras clan. Ilā herself was of doubtful origin. There was no formal or regular marriage between her and Buddha and the caste of their offspring, Pururava, was determined as Kṣatriya by his *karma*, duty or conduct."[25] There need be, therefore, no surprise that Yayati acted as he did. In fact he was merely following in the footsteps of his ancestors. Pururavas, the progenitor of the Ailas, had married Urvashi, a Gandharva lady. His son

Āyu had married Asura Svarbhanu's daughter. Thus the Ailas were already of mixed origin, and Asura blood flowed in their veins. The climax came when Yayati not only married an Asura lady but made his son by her his heir and successor to an extensive kingdom in the valley of the Indus mainly inhabited by the Asuras. If Vṛṣaparvā was still alive it must have been some consolation for him to see his daughter's son sitting upon his own throne.

If this interpretation of Yayati's story is correct it should cause no surprise that with Puru as the sovereign the Indus Valley civilization blossomed forth as a composite Asura-Arya culture. Accepting the date given by Allchins for the maturity of the Harappan Civilization, we would be justified in fixing 2150 B.C. as the approximate date of the fusion of these two cultures. That along with a political compromise between the two peoples there was also a cultural fusion is evident from what Gordon has to say about it: "The undoubted taking over by the Indo-Aryans of various elements of iconography and belief from the Harappans argues for such contacts and compromises. It seems likely also that those Aryan or semi-Aryan tribes of the Turvasus, Vrichivants and Yadus, who were located in the south-west and called Dasa in one passage of the *Rigveda* (X. 62,10) and who are referred to as having been brought by Indra from across the sea (samudra Indus ?), were descendants of the Jhūkar people."[26]

The result of this compromise in the cultural field was that the Ailas came to be often called Asuras. In fact Puru himself has been called Asura-Rākṣasa in the *Ṛgveda* (VII-8-4) as explained in the *Śatapatha* Brāhmaṇa. Many other kings of the Lunar dynasty such as Madhu, Lavana, Kaṁsa, Jarasandha have been called Asuras, Daityas, Dānavas and Rakshasas. It is noteworthy that Krishna himself was an Aila and while Madhu and Lavana were his ancestors, Kaṁsa was his maternal uncle. If it is argued that these epithets were abusively applied to enemies we would like to point out that to the best of our awareness there is not a

single instance of a Mānava king for whom any of these epithets has been used. It is because the Ailas not only inherited the Asura culture but also contributed to it, making it the common Asura-Arya heritage. The orthodox followers of the Vedic religion often forgot their Arya ancestry and called them Asuras.

According to the Puranas, Yayati allotted territories also to his other four sons but as no two Puranas agree as to which regions fell to their share we are unable to hazard any theory. Druhyu and Anu, the two other sons born of the Asura mother Śarmiṣṭhā, may have received parts of north-western Punjab to rule as feudatories under Puru. What appears to be certain is that Yadu and Turvasu, sons of the Brahmin mother Devayani were kept out of the valley of the Indus and were allotted regions west of the Indus in Iran, perhaps in Seistan and Kandahar. This is proved by a reference in the *Rigveda* mentioned above by Gordon, that Indra brought them from across the sea. Gordon's conjecture that in this particular verse the word '*Samudra*' stands for the river Indus is also the view of some other scholars. However, even if it stands for 'sea' or 'ocean' it does not contradict our view that Yadu and Turvasu came later on the Indian political scene from eastern Iran.

The descendants of Yayati's five sons later became the five tribes named after them. The repeated references in the *Ṛgveda* to Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Anu and Puru do not signify the sons of Yayati but their descendants. This fact has been convincingly argued by Pradhan in the following passage :— "Vasiṣṭha, the priest of Sudās, in his prayers to Indra says : 'Oh owner of wealth, being your friends and beloved, and leaders of your sacrifice, we shall enjoy at home. Make Turvaśa and Yādva submit, thereby making Atithigva happy.' By the word Atithigva here, Vasiṣṭha means his Yajamāna Sudās who was ever mindful towards guests ; and by Turvaśa and Yādva, he evidently means the distant descendants respectively of Turvasu and Yadu, for the word

Yādva is admittedly a Vedic patronymic derived from Yadu, and the word Turvaśa is a derivative of the Vedic word Turvas, (Turvas being the Vedic form which stands for the Puranic form Turvasu ; the form Turvasu also is sometimes used in the Ṛgveda). Lines other than those preserved in the Puranas existed, as each king was the father, not of one son only, but of many sons ; and in this way the Yadus and the Turvasus multiplied into tribes. The chiefs of these two tribes were titled as Yādva and Tūrvaśa respectively. Similar were the cases with the descendants of Druhyu and Anu. Druhyu and Anu became the titles of the chiefs of the tribes into which the descendants of the primitive ancestors multiplied. Compare Janaka, Ikṣvāku, Sṛñjaya Bṛhadratha etc. Any descendant of Janaka could be called a Janaka, and descendant of Bṛhadratha could be called a Bṛhadratha, any descendant of Sṛñjaya could be called a Sṛñjaya, and so forth. Particularly notice, in this connection the statements of Vasiṣṭha. He says : "Sixty hundred and six thousand six hundred sixty-six Anus and Druhyus (=i.e. the descendants of Anu and Druhyu) lay down on the battlefield for Sudās ; these acts attest the might of Indra." The huge number of the Anus and Druhyus who opposed Sudās, the son of Pijavana Sṛñjaya, proves that they were the distant descendants of the primitive ancestors, and were formed into tribes in course of time."[27]

According to some ancient authorities the epithet '*pañcha-janāḥ*' in the *Rigveda* stands for the aforesaid five related tribes descended from the five sons of Yayati. Although Puru was favoured by his father his early descendants do not figure much in the Puranic accounts except his grandson Aviddha. The *Mahabharata* and some Puranas credit him with the conquest of eastern regions which earned for him the title '*prāchīnvat*'. N. C. Chakladar took this to mean the conquest of Eastern India as we know it now. The difficulty in accepting most of Chakladar's theories propounded in his work "Aryan Occupation of Eastern India" arises from

the fact that the four directions are interdependent and the question arises : 'East of what ?' Kashi is to the West of Patna and to the East of Ayodhya. In view of these doubts all we can say is that Aviddha conquered some territory east of the Indus Valley.

The descendants of Turvasu deserve special mention as according to the *Mahabharata* one of their clans came to be known as Yavanas. We have already given it as our view that Turvasu, the younger son of Devayani, was allotted territory in Iran along with his elder brother Yadu, and it is not Turvasu and Yadu but their descendants who were brought to India by Indra. It would, therefore, appear that while some clans of the Turvasus entered India, those who were left behind came to be known as Yavanas. The Yavanas mentioned in later Indian literature such as the *Gārgī-Samhitā* who have been identified with Ionians must have been one of the Turvasu clans. Even with this equation, the full identification of Yavanas has remained a puzzle in as much as the Puranas associate them with very early kings such as Sagara, who is said to have lived at the end of the Tretā-Yuga. We give below an extract from Pradhan which we feel offers a satisfactory solution of this Yavana problem :— "The Mahābhārata says : 'It has been remembered that the Yavanas were the descendants of Turvasu, the son of Yayati Nahuṣa.' The philologists declare that the 'Y' in 'Yavana' may be replaced by 'J'; that is both the forms 'Yavana' and 'Javana' are permissible and therefore interchangeable. Javana even in later Sanskrit literature means 'one who possesses speed' (Compare Yaska's derivation of Pijavana) (Nir, II, 24 Roth's edition, Gottingen). Now the word Turvas also means 'one who runs fast', so that both the words Turvas and Javana mean the same. Just as the Sṛñjayas (Sat. Bra. x, 9, 3, 1; 2; &c) mean the descendants of Sṛñjana, the Jamadagnis (Jamadagnayah Rv. III, 53, 16) mean the descendants of Jamadagni Ārcīka, the Bharatas (Bharatāṇ Rv. III, 33, 11; 12;) mean the descendants of Bharata, so the Yavanas (=the Javanas) mean the

descendants of Yavana (=Turvasu). In Hebrew literature the son of Nweos or Nwexos (=Noah in English) is called Yepheth or Yapht and his son is called Javana. The similarity of names makes the following equations very remarkable.

Nahuṣa =Nweos Yayati =Yapht
Turvasu=Yavana=Javana

Did the Hebrews borrow the names of famous ancient Indo-Aryan kings ? We suspect that the Yavanas who have been identified with the ancient Greeks, were, after all, the descendants of Turvasu (=Yavana) the son of Yayati Nahuṣa."[28]

However, of all the tribes descended from Yayati's sons it is the Yadus, who, after their arrival in India at a somewhat later date, became the most important factor in the politics of ancient India. Later on they became divided into three clans, the Yadavas proper, the Satvatas and the Haihayas. Although we cannot definitely say as to who was the first Yadava king to enter India yet the probability is that it was Chitraratha, the twelfth descendant of Yadu, who seems to have established himself somewhere on the left bank of the Indus. This must have resulted in encroachment on the domain of the then Puru king Matināra. In order to strengthen himself against the aggressive Yadava Chitraratha the Paurava Matināra must have tried to strengthen himself by an alliance with his eastern neighbours, the Mānavas of Brahmāvarta. This explains the Puranic reference that Matināra gave his daughter Gauri to Yavanāśva II, of the Solar dynasty. Chitraratha's son Śaśabindu was a great conqueror. The Puranas call him a *Chakravartin*, almost the first Aryan ruler to hold this exalted position. He may have driven the Purus further towards the east, almost to the right bank of the Ravi, but his main conquests seem to have been in the southern direction. The Puṇyajana Rakshasas, probably a branch of former Asuras, were driven away from Gujarat. Northern Malwa also seems to have been conquered and a push towards the Narmada begun.

However, Śaśabindu's career of conquest seems to have been checked by the Mānavas of Brahmāvarta who rose to supreme position in Aryan India under their king Māndhātṛ the son of Yuvanāśva and Gauri mentioned above. That some sort of compromise was effected between the Yādavas under Śaśabindu and the Mānavas under Māndhātṛ is evidenced from the story that Māndhātṛ married Bindumati, the daughter of Śaśabindu.

Māndhātṛ not only figures in the list of *Chakravartins* given by various Puranas but has also been called '*Sārvabhauma*' or the 'lord of all the lands'. He not only put an end to Śaśbindu's career of conquest towards the east but after the conquest of the valley of the Ganga at least up to the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamuna, carried his arms up to the Narmada, where the town Māndhātā, named after him, came into existence. His brother Muchukunda is said to have established himself there.

The conquests of Māndhātṛ appear to have been so widespread that the Puranas refer to a legendary saying that the sun rose and set within 'Māndhātṛ's territories. Since Māndhātṛ came to hold such a prestigious position in the eyes of ancient Aryans, it is no wonder that he also came to be associated with Devaloka. According to some accounts he was looked upon as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Some hymns of the *Rigveda* have also been attributed to him entitling him to be called a *Rājarṣi*. His association with Indra is rather a puzzle. Firstly it is mentioned by the Puranas that after his birth he was nursed by Indra. Then it is alleged that he planned to invade Devaloka. When Indra came to know about his intentions he advised him first to subdue Lavaṇa, a Sātavata king descended from Yadu, and then think of conquering Devaloka. Māndhātṛ invaded Mathurā and was killed by Lavaṇa, who, as already mentioned, has been called an Asura. This ended the career of Māndhātṛ who appears to have subjugated the whole of northern India up to the northern banks of the Narmada. We believe that it was

during the reign of Māndhātṛ or a little later that the three kingdoms of Kosala, Videha and Vaiśālī came into existence one after the other.

The Puranas give a list of kings defeated by Māndhātṛ, prominent among them being the Paurava Aṅga Bṛhadratha and Angara, a distant descendant of Druhyu, the son of Yayati. The Druhyus were valiant fighters and their king Angara fell fighting on the battlefield. This defeat compelled the Druhyus to retire to the west of the Indus and to found the kingdom of Gāṅdhāra. Still later a section of the Druhyu tribe seems to have re-entered Iran and got mixed up with the Iranians. Since the Bhojas, a clan of the Yadava tribe, are said to have descended from Druhyu we may hold that another clan intermingled with the Yadavas.

The kingdoms, founded during Māndhātṛ's time or a little later, continued to prosper with the result that after Māndhātṛ the centre of Mānava power shifted towards the east, and came to be centred in Kośala with its capital at Ayodhya. However, after Māndhātṛ and before the birth of Sagara of Ayodhya it is the Haihaya branch of the Yadus who came to occupy the supreme position in the whole of northern India. They occupied southern Malwa and one of their kings, Mahiṣmanta drove out the Mānavas from Māndhātā. He founded and fortified the city of Māhiṣmatī (named after him) and started the process of occupation of territories lying on the south of the Narmada.

According to the unanimous testimony of the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* the greatest Haihaya king was Arjuna, popularly known as Sahasrārjuna. Not content with his dominions extending from the Indus to the Narmada he turned his attention towards the valley of the Ganga. As a result of his conquests in the north he is said to have extended his power even up to the Himalayas. But he came into conflict with his Bhargava priest Jamadagni and killed him. In revenge Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni, not only killed Arjuna but is said to have destroyed the Kṣatriyas twenty-one

times over. Shorn of all its frills and fanciful exaggerations, so characteristic of mythologies, some historical substance seems to emerge from the story of Paraśurama. His avenging career of aggression must have given a setback to the growing power of the Haihayas. However, they soon recovered and with the assistance of some foreign tribes named as Śakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Paradas and Pahlavas they planned to conquer Madhyadeśa. The Haihayas and these foreign allies reached Ayodhya and killed its king Bāhu. Their occupation of Ayodhya proved to be short-lived as Sagara, the son of Bāhu, ultimately drove them out.

The career of the Ikṣvāku king Sagara is of great importance for the proto-history of the Ganga valley. It was he who started the expansion of the Kośala kingdom towards the river Ganga. It appears that till his time this river had not been explored from its source beyond the Himalayas up to its confluence with the sea. Sagara appears to have organised several expeditions of explorers which again and again met with disaster. But the Ikṣvākus did not give up the attempt. Sagara's grandson Bhagiratha met with success and the ocean came to be called Sāgara. The Ganga itself received the name Bhagirathi to commemorate the great achievement of Bhagiratha. It is possible that from the time of Bhagiratha the river Ganga became navigable up to the sea.

But Sagara's great political achievement was the liberation of Ayodhya from the domination of the Haihayas and the various foreign tribes. It is important to note that it is for the first time, and perhaps the only time during the proto-historic period, that the Puranas specifically make mention of the invasion of India by foreign tribes. Before reaching Ayodhya these Śakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Paradas and Pahlavas must have subjugated various kingdoms in the Punjab and the upper valley of the Ganga. This foreign encroachment does not appear to have been a mere raid but a full-scale invasion. It is true that Sagara not only freed Ayodhya but also made conquests all round, but this did not

result in their extermination or even expulsion from northern India. The Puranas say that when Sagara decided to exterminate them Vasiṣṭha interceded and urged him to spare them with minor punishment. This obliges us to conclude that these foreign tribes must have permanently settled in the north and later on carved out kingdoms for themselves. This must have initiated a revolutionary change in the political map of northern India and we propose to consider it in our next chapter.

Before we close this chapter a few words may again be said about the date of the entry of the Early Aryans, the Mānavas and the Ailas, into India and their expansion in various directions. We have indicated that the Harappan civilization must have reached its maturity in 2150 B.C.— a date arrived at also by some scholars including Allchins. This flowering of Harappan civilization must have been influenced by the entry of the Ailas of the Lunar race. Ghirshman's view that the first wave of the Aryans entered Arachosia or the Kandahar region by the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. confirms this date. The dates assigned to the findings of Ahar, Navadatoli and Eran also lend confirmation to this view as some time must have elapsed before the Ailas reached central India.

As regards the expansion of these early Aryans the Allchins have remarked as follows :—

> The regions...Saurashtra, Rajputana and Malwa, all belong to the low rainfall zone of Western India and West Pakistan. Together they probably represent the areas in which the first synthesis of the Harappan with exotic cultures took place and from which the first waves of Post-Harappan expansion developed. It becomes possible at least to speculate about the identification of archaeological cultures and tribal groups whose names and geographical positions are known from the early Vedic literature, and from later historical traditions such as those of the Puranas. This kind of research is bound to play an increasingly important role as our knowledge advances.[29]

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Chapter
Five

The Rigvedic Aryans
or
The Bharatas

Although the Rigveda has been closely examined for whatever historical data it can yield, it is principally a book of hymns meant to be recited at Vedic sacrifices and other rituals. The hymns it contains were composed in different regions, and the earliest of them in lands outside the Indian sub-continent[1]. The poets and composers naturally belonged to different regions and vastly separated centuries. References of a historical nature found in these hymns are incidental and, therefore, negative inferences drawn from the mention or non-mention of certain things are prone to fall short of truth. Besides, the hymns include many proper names which are not met with anywhere in later literature whether Vedic, Puranic or Epic. In such instances only the comparative method may yield something of historical value, particularly when applied to Iranian and early Indian traditional sources.

The Rigveda refers to Manu and Pururavas and to many other Mānava and Aila kings, but the manner in which these references are made is such that to the hymn-makers these personages must have been distant beings, dimly existent in tradition passed down from generation to generation. However, when Viśvāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha sing of Sudāsa no doubt is left in our minds that they are referring to a contemporary king for whom they acted as priests and from whom they had received gifts. There are hymns composed by these sages

which appear to give an eye-witness account of political events in which they themselves participated.

The one political event that stands out conspicuously from the hymns of the Rigveda is 'Dāśarājña Yuddha' or the 'Battle of Ten kings'. In fact it is the one event of supreme historical importance not only because it is repeatedly referred to in all the ten *maṇḍalas* but also because it brings out prominently a large number of persons—the ancestors, relatives, friends and foes of Sudāsa—and the names of the tribes to which they belonged. Among his relations the most important person mentioned is Divodāsa. Both Divodāsa and Sudāsa belonged to the tribe of the Bhāratas or Tṛtsu-Bhāratas and won a number of victories over their Dasa and Aryan enemies. It is their wars and victories which have been repeatedly sung by their priests in the Rigveda, and we have, therefore, no hesitation in naming it as Bhārata-Veda or the Veda of the Bhāratas and the Bhāratas themselves as the Rigvedic Aryans. If the Rigveda is supposed to deal with the entry of the Aryans into India we would like to urge that it deals only with the entry of the Bhāratas. We have already dealt with the entry of the Asura Aryans and the Early Aryans in our third and fourth chapters respectively and fixed the date of the arrival of the Early Aryans round about 2150 B.C. On the basis of a Rigvedic verse which mentions Harīyūpiya or Harappa and which we shall discuss in due course in this chapter we would like to fix 1750 B.C. as the possible date of the arrival of the Bhāratas into India. This date synchronises with the date of the collapse of the Harappan civilization as accepted by scholars on the basis of recent excavations in the Indus Valley and beyond. It has been suggested by some scholars that the pottery designated as Painted Grey Ware was brought into India by the Bhāratas and this seems most likely.

It may be objected that the Bharatas were descended from the Purus, who, in their turn, were merely a branch of the Ailas and therefore, the Bharatas cannot be accepted as a

fresh wave of Aryan invaders or immigrants. The objection has apparently a good deal of force as the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* have tacked the genealogy of the Bhāratas on to the genealogical tree of the Purus. It therefore becomes imperative to examine carefully the origins of the Bhāratas. Let us first take the parentage of Duṣyanta the father of Bharata from whom the Bhāratas received their name. The Puranas record that Duṣyanta was a Paurava or descendant of Puru, the son of Yayati and that he was adopted by Marutta a descendant of Turvasa, king of Vaiśālī. The *Bhagavata Purana* (9.20.7) gives his father's name as Raibhya and the Kumbhakonam edition of the *Mahabharata* (*Ādiparva*, 89.14) calls him the son of Ilina. The *Matsya Purāṇa* (49.10) supports the above version. According to the *Brahmāṇda Purāṇa* Ilina was not his father but grandfather. The Bhaviṣya and the Harivaṁśa make Taṁsu his father. The Vayu calls the father Malina, which is perhaps a corrupt form of Ilinā. Some other Puranas turn the male Ilina into female Ilina and say that Duṣyanta was her grandson. The same confusion is seen in regard to his mother's name. The *Mahabharata* gives her name as Rathaṁtarī and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* as Upadānavī. Having done his utmost to disentangle this confusion F. E. Pargiter expresses his utter bewilderment in the following words :

"From Taṁsu to Duṣyanta there is great uncertainty. The chief texts, the Vāyu, Matsya, Brahma and Harivaṁśa have a certain seeming agreement, yet really supply no intelligible pedigree, as will appear if we try to construct one from their statements. All that seems clear is that there was a remarkable woman Ilinā and that her grandson was Duṣyanta. The *Mahabharata* accounts turn her into a king Ilina. Queens were sometimes turned into kings mistakenly, but I am not aware of any instance of the reverse ; so that these accounts appear to be incorrect, and the genealogical verse quoted is not found in these Puranas. The other Puranas which are later have connected up a pedigree, but differ

incompatibly and omit Ilinā altogether. The truth is, there is a serious gap in the genealogy here....."[2]

While Pargiter draws his own conclusion from this 'serious gap' in the genealogy of the Pauravas the confusion and the resultant credibility-gap may most probably have been caused by the clumsy attempts of the authors of the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* to connect a fresh wave of Aryan invaders, the Bhāratas, with the Pauravas with a view to making them respectable. It is the time-honoured custom that the adoptee assumes the parentage of the adopter but even after Duṣyanta had been adopted by the Turvasu Marutta the Puranas, instead of calling Duṣyanta's descendants as Turvasus, persist in treating them as Pauravas or Purus. We have shown in the previous chapter that according to the *Mahabharata* the descendants of Turvasu were Yavanas. Of course, the Puranas could not even think of turning their favourite Bhāratas, the Rigvedic Aryans *par excellence*, into Yavanas ! We are thus led to believe that the Puru kingdom having been destroyed by the Haihayas, Duṣyanta accepted adoption by Marutta and became his successor. Later on he prospered and conquered the Puru realm which had been destroyed by the Haihayas with the help of the Turvasus, and began to call himself a Puru. He had once forgotten Śakuntalā, if Kālidāsa is to be believed, after marrying her and he may have similarly forgotten his adopted father and the Turvasus when he began to rule over the territory which had once belonged to the Purus. In view of this it is not surprising that the Turvasus figure as the opponents of the Bhāratas in the Rigveda until they were absorbed by the Sṛñjayas, one of the clans of the Bhāratas.

The fact appears to be that the Bhāratas belonged to one of the foreign tribes mentioned by the Puranas, who had invaded northern India at a time when the Haihayas were attacking it from the south. That this was a period of anarchy has been pointed out in telling words by Pargiter :

After Rama's time the Haihayas recovered their power and

extended their conquests into N. India, making continual raids, overthrowing kingdoms, founding none, and devastating the countries, which were then overrun by tribes from the north-west also. The kṣatriyas must have perished by thousands. The Haihayas overwhelmed Kanyakubja and Ayodhya, but were arrested by the Vaiśālī kings, and afterwards Sagara destroyed all those enemies, rescued India from those evils and re-established peace. The carnage and ruin must have continued nearly a century, and the deplorable condition to which North India was reduced may be imagined by that caused by the Marathas and the Persian and Afghan invasions in the eighteenth century, for the Haihayas occupied the same region as the Marathas and the two periods are strictly comparable and remarkably alike.[3]

As already stated in the previous chapter Sagara drove them out from Ayodhya and was prevented from exterminating them by his preceptor Vaśiṣṭha. With the death of Sagara the supremacy of the Ikṣvākus of Ayodhya came to an end for the time being and this must have afforded opportunities to these foreign tribes to carve out several principalities for themselves in the upper Ganga valley under various tribal names, the Bhāratas being one of them.

In the Rigveda we find the Bhāratas associated with the Tṛtsus and their mutual relationship has been a subject matter of discussion among scholars. The authors of the Vedic Index have summed up the discussion as follows :

> In one passage the Bhāratas are, like the Tṛtsus, enemies of the Purus : there can be little doubt that Ludwig's view of the identity of the Bhāratas and Tṛtsus is practically correct. More precisely Oldenberg considers that the Tṛtsus are the Vaśiṣṭhas, the family singers of the Bhāratas; while Geldner recognizes, with perhaps more probability, in the Tṛtsus the royal family of the Bhāratas. That the Tṛtsus and Bhāratas were enemies, as Zimmer holds, is most improbable even on geographical grounds, for the

Tṛtsus in Zimmer's view occupied the country to the east of the Paruṣṇī (Ravi), and the Bhāratas must therefore be regarded as coming against the Tṛtsus from the west, whereas the Rigveda recognizes two Bhārata chiefs on the Sarasvatī, Āpayā, and Dṛṣadvatī—that is, in the holy land of India, the Madhyadeśa. Hillebrandt sees in the connexion of the Tṛtsus and the Bhāratas a fusion of two tribes ; but this is not supported by any evidence beyond the fact that in his opinion some such theory is needed to explain Divodāsa's appearing in connexion with the Bharadvāja family, while Sudāsa, his son, or perhaps grandson (cf. Pijavana), is connected with the Vaśiṣṭhas and the Viśvāmitras.[4]

In our view the Tṛtsus were neither Vasiṣṭhas nor the royal family of the Bhāratas. To begin with, the Tṛtsus and the Bhāratas must have been separate tribes and at one time, as Zimmer holds, also enemies. The Tṛtsus had come to India earlier than the Bhāratas and later on the two tribes intermingled and the Tṛtsus also came to be called Bhāratas. But then who were the Tṛtsus ? To answer the question we have to direct our attention to the proto-history of Iran. In our second chapter we have already equated Yama, the brother of Manu Vaivasvata, with Iranian Yima, the son of Vivanghat. According to the Iranian tradition Yima met his end at the hands of Azidahaka, Indian Ahi-dasa or Asura Vṛtra. The Rigveda gives the impression that Vṛtra was killed by Indra with the assistance of Tṛta the son of Āptya, but the Iranian tradition omits Indra altogether and attributes the great deed of killing the demon Vṛtra to Tṛta whom it calls Thrita or Traitaona or Faridun, the son of Āthawya. That Vedic Tṛta and Iranian Thrita are one and the same has not been disputed by any scholar.

Tṛta, having put an end to Azidahaka or Vṛtra, liberated Iran and became one of its greatest rulers in succession to Yima. Upto his time Iran was a unified realm but he divided it among his three sons, Selm getting the west, Tur the east or

Turan and Aerij, the youngest, Iran proper. The two elder brothers, dissatisfied with their share, united their forces and after the death of Tṛta, invaded Iran and killed Aerij. Since Tur was the instigator and main culprit, henceforward the Iranians came to look upon the Turanians as their national enemies. Menucheher, the son of Aerij killed his two uncles in retaliation. This roused Turan, and Afrasiab, one of its greatest kings, successfully invaded Iran and is said to have ruled over it for twelve years. This put an end to the Peshdadian dynasty to which both Yima and Tṛta had belonged. Afrasiab's rule caused a revolution and its leader Kavi Kavata (Kaikobad) founded the Kayanian or Kavi dynasty of Iran. Every king of this dynasty had the epithet 'Kavi' prefixed to his name. Says F. C. Davar : "The scholars and seers of the Vedic people, who were *Soma* priests (Rigveda. IX. 72) and believed to be divinely inspired and endowed with occult wisdom, are referred to with great respect in the Rigveda I.142,8. They were known as *kavi* or wise, and the term was applied even to the Vedic gods like Agni, the Ashwins and the Maruts (Rigveda III. 14,1). Even in Iran, *kavi* was a eulogistic term prefixed to the names of kings, like *Kavi* Kavata (Kaiqubad), *Kavi* Usana (Kaikaoos), *Kavi* Haosrava (Kaikhusru) and *Kavi* Vishtasp (Kai Gushtasp), who were all for that reason said to have belonged to the Kayanian dynasty."[5]

We have gone into this story of Tṛta and his successors with a view to suggest that the Tritsus of the Rigveda were the descendants of Tṛta. Max Muller had once suggested in another connection that the form of the word *trita* was originally *tṛta* and this form is corroborated by *Atharvaveda* (VI. 113, 1—3).[6] We think that the puzzle of the identification of the Tṛtsus can be solved more satisfactorily by affiliating them with Tṛta and treating them as his descendants than by various alternatives mentioned in the Vedic Index. It appears that it was during the Afrasiab's occupation of Iran that the Iranian tribes mentioned by the Puranas led by Tṛtsu's descen-

dants crossed the Indus and invaded northern India up to Ayodhya and after the death of the great Ikṣvāku king Sa ara carved out a kingdom for themselves in the valley of the Indian Sarasvati. When later another Iranian tribe, the Bhāratas, entered India, the Tṛtsus resisted them but after their defeat merged with them. This should satisfactorily resolve the mystery of the relationship of the Tṛtsus and the Bhāratas. At any rate this view seems more plausible than the one expressed by Bhargava who says :

> After Ajamīḍha, the Bhāratas divided into two great branches. In the main line the king who succeeded Ajamīḍha was Riksha. The younger branch established a new kingdom, the founder of which, according to the Puranas, was Ajamīḍha's son Nīla. No name is given to this dynasty in the Puranas. We are, however, fortunate to know from the Rigveda that this dynasty was known as the Tṛtsu dynasty. The reason of this name being given to this dynasty is not known. It is, however, probable that the real name of the fourth king of this dynasty who is variously called Riksha and Prithu in the Puranas, was Titsus.[7]

We have already referred to Oldenberg's view that the Tṛtsus were Vaśiṣṭhas. We have disagreed with this identification of the Tṛtsus with the Vaśiṣṭhas but there is no doubt that Oldenberg was misled by the close connection of the two peoples. What appears more probable is that the Vaśiṣṭhas were the priests of the Tṛtsus in the same way as Viśvāmitra was of the Bhāratas. Viśvāmitra himself belonged to the Bhārata tribe and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (*33,5*) calls him '*Bhārata-ṛṣabha*' or 'the best among the Bhāratas'. However, the Vaśiṣṭha could, in no case, be considered Tṛtsus, who were Kṣatriyas ; as Vaśiṣṭha is stated to have thrice refused to accept Viśvāmitra as a Brahmarṣi because in his view a Kṣatriya could not become a Brahmin. What is probable is that as the priests of the Tṛtsus they came to be closely connected with them and when they merged in the Bhāratas the Vaśiṣ-

ṭhas became the priests also of the Bhāratas. This led to the well-known rivalry between Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra repeatedly mentioned not only in the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* but also hinted in the hymns of the Rigveda. Our proposition that the Vaśiṣṭhas were closely connected with the Tṛtsus may be supported by certain statements made in the Puranas which we proceed to mention below.

As stated by P. L. Bhargava, the Vaśiṣṭhas, Agastyas and Kauśikas were "the latest families" of Brahmins. Viśvāmitra being one of the Kauśikas and Agastya being the real brother of Vaśiṣṭha it would be seen that all the three had no connection with the Early Aryans and must have entered India with the foreign tribes who had invaded north India when the Haihayas attacked it from the south. This is supported by the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* which associate the Agastyas with the Haihayas and Viśvāmitra with the Bhāratas. Out of the three, only Vaśiṣṭha remains and he, as suspected by Oldenberg on the strength of some of the hymns of the Rigveda was connected with the Tṛtsus, whom we regard one of the clans of the foreign invading tribes mentioned by the Puranas.

How closely Vaśiṣṭha was associated with these foreign tribes is proved by the story of his celestial cow (kāmadhenu) producing Śakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Pāradas and Pahlavas to protect herself from the soldiers of Viśvāmitra, who under their master's order, were attempting to take the cow away forcibly. It would be remembered that these were the very foreign tribes who had invaded Ayodhya and killed its king Bāhu. What is surprising is that during the minority of Sagara, the son of Bāhu, and the occupation of the Kosala kingdom by these tribes Vaśiṣṭha continued to hold his former position as the priest-cum-Prime Minister or supreme adviser of the realm, and that when Sagara re-occupied Ayodhya and decided to exterminate these foreigners he interceded on their behalf and saw to it that they were let off with light punishment ! Thus it is clear that Vaśiṣṭha came alongwith these foreign tribes into India, ruled jointly with

them over Ayodhya for some years and ultimately saved them from extermination by Sagara. We would prefer to treat Vaśiṣṭha as a new Irano-Aryan entrant into India along with the Tṛtsus, branch of one of these foreign tribes referred to above rather than paint him as a traitor to his own country, who invited foreign tribes to invade it. In conclusion we may point out that all these tribes have been looked upon as Aryans. The Śakas were, as mentioned earlier, the descendants of Manu's son Nariṣyanta and the Yavanas of Yayati's son Turvasu. The Kambojas are well known as a Vedic tribe and the Pāradas and Pahlavas being Iranians were certainly considered Aryans. Thus Vaśiṣṭha, himself an Aryan, could have become the priest of the Tṛtsus. There is no other explanation of the sudden emergence of the Vaśiṣṭhas as an important Brahmin clan.

Let us now turn to Rigveda itself to see if we are on the right track in tracing the Bhāratas back to Iran. We shall begin by quoting four verses from the sixth *maṇḍala* (27,5—8) by Ṛṣi Bharadvāja :

"Favouring Abhyāvartin, the son of Chayamāna, Indra destroyed the race of Varśikha, killing the descendants of Vṛchīvata who were stationed on Hariyūpīyā, on the eastern part, while the western (troop) was scattered through fear.

"Indra, the invoked of many, thirty hundred mailed warriors (were collected) together on the Yavavatī to acquire glory, but the Vṛchīvata advancing hostilely, and breaking the sacrificial vessels, went to (their own) anihilation.

"He whose bright prancing horses, delighted with choice fodder, proceed between heaven and earth gave up Turvasa to Sṛñjaya, subjecting the Vṛchīvatas to the descendants of Devavāta.

"The oppulent supreme sovereign Abhyāvartin, the son of Chayamāna, presents, Agni, to me two damsels riding in cars, and twenty cows, this donation of the Pārthava cannot be destroyed."

In the above verses Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna has been

called the son of Chayamāna and also a descendant of Devavāta. He is a Samrāṭ or supreme sovereign and a Pārthava. He appears to be associated with Sṛñjaya. He is said to have defeated Turvasus and Vṛchīvatas near Hariyūpĭyā. So far as Hariyūpīyā is concerned Sāyaṇa, the famous commentator of the Rigveda, says that it was either some river or some city (*Hariyūpīyā nāma kāchinnadī kāchinnagarīvā*). What makes these verses noteworthy is that a number of scholars including Marshall are now inclined to equate this Hariyūpīyā with the ancient city of Harappa after which the Indus valley civilization has come to be called 'The Harappa Civilization'.

While analysing these verses let us first take up Devavāta. In the Rigveda (III. 23.1-5), Devavāta figures as a hymn-composer jointly with his brother Devaśravas in honour of god Agni and calls himself and his brother Bhāratas. They appear as ardent fire-worshippers like all other Bhāratas. This Bhārata ancestry of Devavāta makes Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna also a descendant of king Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta. Of course, there is no doubt about Sṛñjaya being a Bhārata as the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* definitely place him in the genealogy of the Bhāratas. Thus we succeed in establishing at least this much that the victors in the battle near the city of Hariyūpīyā or Harappa were the Bhāratas. We know nothing about the Vṛchīvatas who suffered a crushing defeat in this battle, but the Turvasus, who were defeated along with them, were certainly the descendants of Turvasu, the son of Yayati.

Now we turn our attention to another famous Bhārata king Sudāsa, the victor of *Dāśarājña Yuddha* or 'The Battle of ten kings'. According to the Rigveda (VII. 18/21) he too is called a descendant of Devavāta. Thus Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, the victor of Hariyūpīyā and Sudāsa, the victor of the Battle of ten kings become related as both of them were descended from Devavāta. But this relationship does not seem to have prevented Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna from joining the confederacy of the ten kings to attack Sudāsa.

According to Rigvedic description of the Battle of ten kings he was one of those members of the confederacy who lost their lives. Sudāsa is said to have killed him like the animal meant to be sacrificed in an *Yajña*. This hymn (RV. VII. 18,8) expressly calls him 'Kavi Chāyamāna'.

We have already mentioned in this very chapter that in the Kayānian dynasty of Iran every king bore the title of *Kavi*. Have we then to connect Kavi Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna with the Kayānian dynasty of Iran ? In this connection it is also highly significant that this supreme sovereign Abhyāvartin has also been called '*Pārthava*'. Taking all these points into consideration we are not surprised that Ludwig and Hillebrandt came to hold the view that Abhyāvartin was a Parthian and thus an Iranian. The verses quoted above fully support the conclusion of Ludwig and Hillebrandt. When we consider the words '*Kavi*' and '*Pārthava*' together the question arises whether the home of the Kavis or the kings of the Kayānian dynasty was Pārthiā, now known as Khorasan. This definitely seems to be so. In the second chapter, we have quoted from a passage in Bundehishn, noticed by Herzfeld, as evidence to show that Yima had established the sacred fire called *Adhur Varreh* near his capital Khvarizm. The later part of the passage says that Kavi Viśtāspa, the patron of Zoroaster, transferred the same fire to his capital in Parthia. Herzfeld reaches the conclusion that the capital of Pārthava was situated in the plain of Nishapur near Tos and that it was the home of Kavi Viśtāspa, the protector of Zoroaster.[9]

Thus all available evidence in regard to Kavi Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna indicates that he was connected with the Kavis of Iran and that he was a Pārthava (or Parthian) i.e., an inhabitant of Pārthiā, the home-province of the Kayanians. From the sermons of Zoroaster embodied in the Gāthās it is evident that there were many Kavis in Iran living at one and the same time as the prophet praises only Kavi Viśtāspa and condemns the class of Kavis as a whole calling them 'wilfully

blind'. Perhaps, all the members of the ruling family and the feudatory chiefs of Iran bore this title. They resisted the reform movement of Zoroaster and hence were condemned by him. Abhyāvartin may have been one of them, who left Iran and invaded the Punjab. If out of the two adjectives '*Kavi*' and '*Pārthava*' only one had been applied to Chāyamāna doubt may have still persisted but in view of both of them having been used our surmise becomes plausible. However, there is yet more evidence to support our proposition that the new invaders were from Iran.

The Parthians were also called '*Pṛthus*' and have been referred to as such in the Rigveda (VI. 27, 8), as offering a valuable gift. In another verse (VII. 83, 1) the *Pṛthus* and *Paraśus* (Persians) have been mentioned together as proceeding towards the East desirous of plunder. The name of Sudāsa admittedly a Bhārata, also occurs in this very verse and thus their contemporaneity with the Bhāratas becomes unmistakably established. That these *Pṛthus* and *Paraśus* referred to in the Rigveda were Iranians has been supported by a host of scholars such as Ludwig, Weber, J.M. Chatterji and P.V. Kane.

We now take up two more verses from the Rigveda (I. 53, 9-10) which run as follows :

"Thou renowned Indra, overthrowest by the not-to-be overtaken chariot wheel, the twenty kings of men, who had come against Suśravas, unaided and their sixty thousand and ninety-nine followers—

"Thou Indra, has preserved Suśravas by thy succour, Tūrvayāṇa by thy assistance. thou hast made Kutsa, Atithigva and Āyu subject to the mighty though youthful (king) Suśravas."

In these two verses it is easy to recognise Divodāsa in Atithigva. He appears to have fought against Suśravas or Suśravā and became subject to him after his defeat. Butwho is this Suśravā, who became the victor of what we may call the 'Battle of Twenty Kings ?' No information is

available about him from the Vedic or the Puranic sources. It is only when we turn to the Iranian *Zend Avesta* that we come across a king Kavi Huśravā by name who has been identified by several Parsi scholars with the Vedic Suśravā.

'Huśravā', the fourth king in the Kayanian list is merely a phonetic variation of 'Suśravā.' Is this Iranian Huśravā then the Rigvedic Suśravā, the mighty conqueror of twenty kings including the Bhārata king Divodāsa referred to in the Rigvedic verses quoted above ?

In connection with Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna we have already referred to the Kayanian or Kavi dynasty of Iran. A list of kings belonging to this line is available but it is extremely doubtful if it has been preserved in an unbroken line. Like the Rigveda the *Zend-Avesta* is not a historical composition and names of kings occur only incidentally. The *Shāhnāmā* of Firdausi is another source of information but it was written in the 11th century A.D. on the basis of scattered traditions put together by the author.

What is significant is that like the Vedic Suśravā this Huśravā is also said to have been one of the greatest conquerors among the kings of Iran. According to the Iranian records Huśravā's father Siawush was murdered by the Turānian king Afrāsiāb, already referred to in one of the preceding paragraphs as the conqueror of Iran and its ruler for twelve years. The truth appears to be that as opposed to the settled and cultured Aryans of Iran, the Turānians, although Aryans, were almost nomads and posed a constant threat to the peace and prosperity of their southern neighbours. Faced with this threat to his people Huśravā is said to have united the various Aryan tribes of Iran and engaged himself in a prolonged war against Afrāsiāb. After defeating his enemy he pursued him in his flight and ultimately succeeded in killing him, thus not only avenging his father's murder but also vindicating the national honour of Iran. The people of Iran immortalised

him by creating the legend that he went to Paradise alive.

Thus we arrive at the following conclusions from the evidence set forth in the previous paragraphs :

(1) That the Bhāratas were residents of ancient Pārthava, which the Greeks later on called Pārthiā.

(2) That they were connected with the Kavis or the rulers of Pārthiā and have been mentioned in the Rigveda along with the Paraśus or Persians.

(3) That one of their ancestors was Devavāta from whom both Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna and Sudāsa claimed descent.

(4) That Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna and Sṛñjaya won the battle of Hariyūpīyā (Harappā) defeating the Turvasus and the Vṛchīvatas; and

(5) That Divodāsa, an important Bhārata king and relation of Sudāsa was once defeated by Huśravā (Vedic Suśravā) of Iran.

We now intend to take up for discussion the important kings among the Bhāratas as given in their Puranic genealogy. But before we do so we must make it clear that we have a feeling that it is impossible to have a genealogy of these or any other ancient people, correct in every detail. The Bhāratas appear to have been a conglomeration of tribes, who entered India in several waves. When we say that they were Iranians we only mean that they came from Iran. As the Iranians themselves were a people formed out of many tribes the fact that the Bhāratas were Iranians does not determine their race. The Tṛtsus, as already stated, were perhaps the first to enter India along with these foreign tribes who invaded India during the reign of king Bāhu of Ayodhya. We have connected Tṛtsus with Tṛta and taken them as his descendants. But Tura, the ancestor of Turanians, was also a son of Tṛta, and therefore, the possibility of the Tṛtsus being Turānians cannot be entirely ruled out. The Pañchālas, a well-known branch of the Bhāratas, have been expressly mentioned as formed out of five tribes, but from the accounts of the Pañchālas given by the Brāhmaṇas, the

Puranas and the *Mahabharata* it would appear that many more tribes entered into their composition. The truth appears to be that the region from Central Asia to *Brahmāvarta* contained numerous tribes, call them Aryans, Śakas, Iranians or Turānians, speaking allied dialects of the Vedic language, and that they entered India in wave after wave. After they had settled in India they being kindred tribes easily got mixed up with one another and collectively came to be known by the name of Bhārata. Eastern Iran, particularly that part of it which is south of the Hindukush, was considered to be not separate from India and therefore these Aryan tribes never felt that to cross the Indus and settle in India was to enter a foreign land. Each conqueror or immigrant, when he settled here, must have left behind in Iran some of his relations with whom contact would necessarily continue for a few generations. In some, if not in many cases, a conqueror must have continued to be the ruler of his territory left behind in Iran after he had conquered some part of the Indian sub-continent and had settled down here. Mohammad of Ghor continued to reside in Ghor and entrusted his Indian conquests to Kutbuddin Aibak. On the other hand, Babur settled down in India and left Kabul and Kandahar to be managed by one of his sons. If, while studying invasions of the proto-historic period, we keep in mind these facts common to many invaders coming from Iran in historic times, our efforts to construct some sort of a plausible account of ancient India may meet with some success.

Now we proceed with the account of the Bhāratas as available in Indian literature. We have already discussed Duṣyanta. He is called '*Vaṁśakāra*' or progenitor of a new dynasty of kings. As a matter of fact it is his son Bharata who is entitled to this epithet, as the tribe of the Bhāratas came to bear his name. Neither Duṣyanta nor Bharata has been mentioned in the Rigveda itself but the *Śatapatha* and the *Aitereya Brāhmaṇas* mention 'Bharata Dauṣyanti' i.e.,

Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta and thus allude to both the father and the son. The *Śatapatha* refers to Bharata's horse-sacrifice and the *Aitareya* to his coronation ceremony performed by the priest Dīrghatamas Māmateya. Bharata also figures in the list of Chakravartins given by a number of Purāṇas.

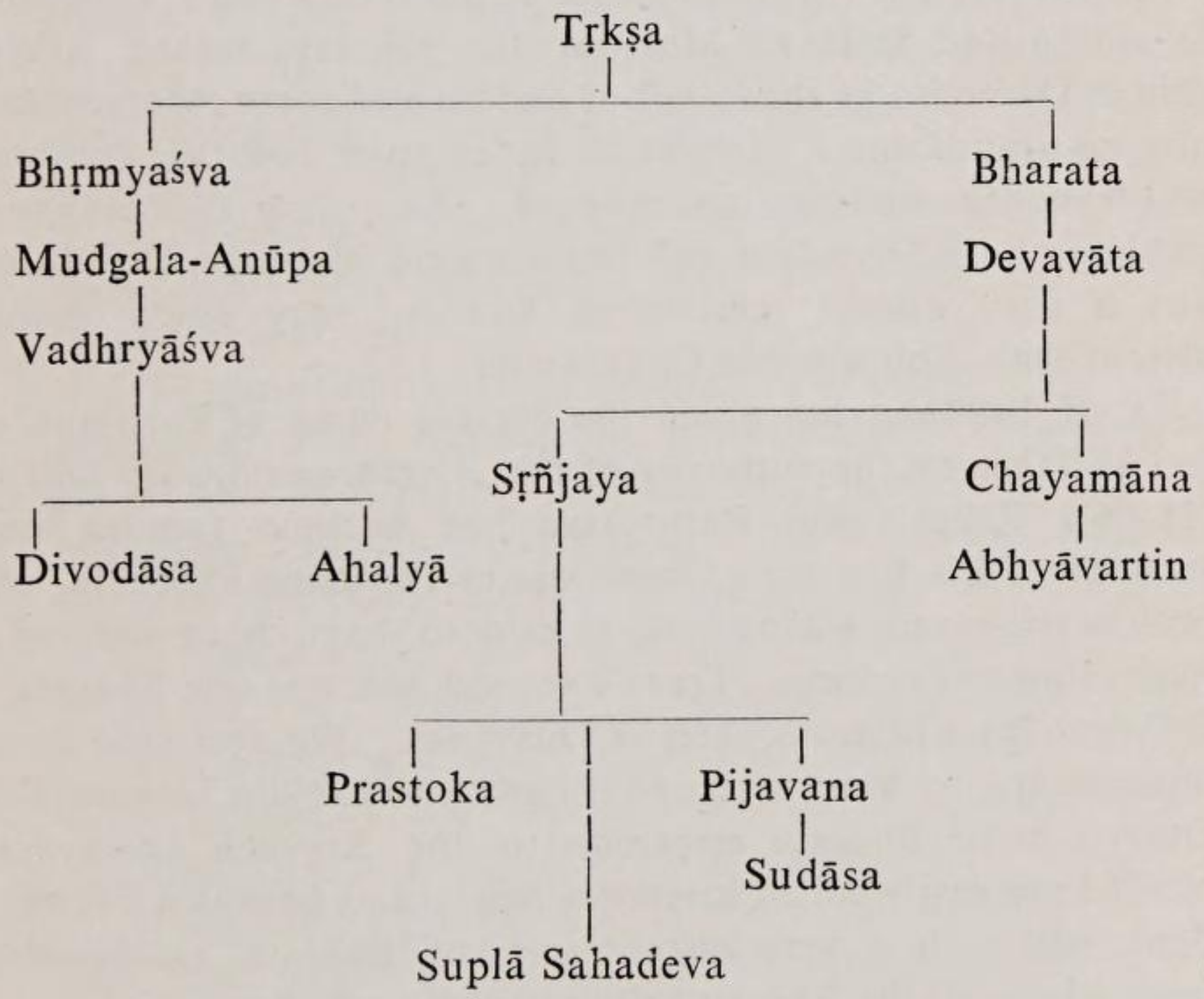
Bharata is said to have adopted Brāhmaṇa Bharadvāja, the son of Brihaspati, as his own son. Bharadvāja's son was Vidathina. According to other traditional accounts it was Vidathina, and not Bharadvāja, who was adopted by Bharata. Be that as it may, henceforward the Bhāratas became a mixed Kṣatriya-Brāhmaṇa tribe and they as Pargiter puts it, "could be either Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas". Vidathina had five sons, Suhotra, Śunahotra, Nara, Garga and Ṛjiśvana. In the opinion of P.L. Bhargava these were not sons but great-grandsons of Vidathina. What is certain is that the eldest of them, Suhotra, ascended the ancestral throne and the other four became Brahmins, and merged with the priestly family of Aṅgirasas. Ṛjiśvana seems to have also been a warrior as, according to the Rigveda, Indra is said to have killed the Dāsa chief Pipru for him.

However, we are more concerned here with Suhotra, who appears to have been a great conqueror. During his reign the Bhārata kingdoms of Kānyakubja and Kashi came into being, with his two sons Jahnu and Kāśa having become their first kings respectively. Thus by the time of Suhotra the Bhāratas had occupied the whole of Ganga-Yamuna doab and their domain began to touch the eastern boundary of the Mānava kingdom of Mithilā.

Perhaps Suhotra's son was Ajamīḍha, who has been mentioned in the Rigveda (IV. 43) along with his brother Purumīḍha. According to P.L. Bhargava, "after Ajamīḍha this line divided into two important branches, his son, Riksha, succeeded in the ancestral kingdom, and another son, Nīla, or one of his near descendants, founded an independent kingdom."[10] In Bhargava's view "after Riksha

this line seems to have passed into obscurity, due to the supremacy of the other line founded by Nīla."[11]

As already pointed out by us earlier, Bhargava has conjecturally given the name Tṛtsus to the kings of the dynasty founded by Nīla and has arbitrarily named one of its first kings as Tṛtsu. S. N. Pradhan, after putting together a mass of evidence, has reconstructed the later portion of the genealogy of the Bhāratas which appears to us to be more plausible than any other so far available. As it is the kings figuring in this latest part of the genealogy who were great warriors and whose names have been repeatedly mentioned in the Rigveda we reproduce it below as collated by Pradhan :[12]



The names listed above not only enable us to understand the Rigvedic verses already quoted by us but also throw a flood of light on many other names of the Bhāratas occurring in the Rigveda. It will be now easier to grasp that Sṛñjaya,

the son, and Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, the grandson of Devavāta, fought shoulder to shoulder against the Turvasas and the Vṛchīvatas on the battle-field of Hariyūpīyā. It is also now clear that although both Abhyāvartin and Sudāsa were descendants of Devavāta, this near relationship did not prevent them from engaging in a contest for supreme power. Abhyāvartin was already a *Samrāṭ* or emperor and his younger contemporary Sudāsa tried to eclipse him. Abhyāvartin evidently headed a confederacy of ten kings to preserve his supreme position. Fortune favoured Sudāsa and Abhyāvartin, the victor of Hariyūpīyā, lost his life in the battle fought on the banks of the Ravi.

But what is of real importance is the relationship between Divodāsa and Sudāsa. Most of the scholars regard Athithigva Divodāsa as the father of Sudāsa and some others make him his grandfather. The Vedic Index gives both viewpoints and leaves the question unanswered. According to Pradhan, although both Divodāsa and Sudāsa were Bhāratas, Divodāsa was a very distant relation of Sudāsa, very much more distant than Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna.

S. N. Pradhan has given the correct name of Purujanu's son as Tṛkṣa on the authority of the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (11, 6). Tṛkṣa's son Bhṛmyāśva has become famous on account of his five sons, from whom the name Pāñchāla, of both a tribe and a kingdom, is said to have been derived. According to Pradhan, Tṛkṣa's second son was one Bharata, different from Bharata, son of Duṣyanta. We feel that it is unnecessary to have a second Bharata to explain Devavatā's father's name Bharata mentioned in the Rigveda. Devavāta could have easily called himself a Bharata as he was a descendant, although a very distant one, of Bharata Dauṣyanti, from whom all the Bhāratas derived their tribal name.

For the sake of convenience in discussion we would call the two branches of these later Bhāratas as Bhṛmyāśvas and Devavātas. The eldest son of Bhṛmyāśva was Mudgala whose wife was Indrasenā, the daughter of king Nala of Niṣādha,

made famous by the story of Nala and Damayantī in the *Mahabharata* and the poem of Śrīharṣa called "*Naiṣadhīya Charitam*". Indrasenā has also been called Mudgalānī in the Rigveda (X. 102). Some of the descendants of Mudgala became Brahmins and have been named Maudgala brahmins after his name. Mudgala's son, who succeeded him on the throne, was Vadhryāśva. The Rigveda mentions him (VI. 31, 1; X. 69,1) as a devotee of god Agni and also as having been blessed with a son, Divodāsa by name, by the river goddess Sarasvatī.

We now turn to the other branch descended from Devavāta. His two sons were Sṛñjaya and Chayamāna. Chayamāna's son was emperor Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna. We have already alluded to both Sṛñjaya and Abhyāvartin as the victors in the battle of Hariyūpīyā. The descendants of Sṛñjaya came to be known as Sṛñjayas, who are said to have united with the Pañchālas. Sṛñjaya had three sons known as Suplā Sahadeva, Pijavana and Prastoka. The son of Pijavana was Sudāsa, who triumphed over ten kings in the battle known as *Dāśarājña*.

The most famous kings among the Bhāratas are Divodāsa, descended from Bhṛmyaśva, and Sudāsa, descended from Devavāta. It is mainly the exploits of these two kings which have been repeatedly referred to in the Rigveda. Divodāsa's father Vadhryāśva himself seems to have been a warrior of note, as is evident from Ṛṣi Sumitra's statement (RV.X.69, 12) that his fire destroyed his enemies. That he and his son Divodāsa were great devotees of god Agni has been mentioned in the hymns. Vadhryāśva had established his own sacred fire and nourished it as a father nourishes his son (RV. X. 69, 10).

Divodāsa surpassed his father as a warrior. A hymn (RV. VI. 61) describes him as the 'impetuous son of Vadhryāśva.' Another verse (RV. X. 48,8) compares the protection afforded by him to the Guṅgu tribe with "food for human beings", meaning thereby that the Guṅgus could not have survived without his support as human beings cannot survive

without food.

As mentioned earlier, according to the Rigveda (VI. 61, 1) Divodāsa was born to Vadhryāśva by the blessings of the goddess Sarasvatī, which is interpreted as his having been born on the banks of the river Sarasvatī. It is difficult to decide whether the Sarasvatī referred to here was the one in *Brahmāvarta* or *Harahvaitī* of Arachosia. Hillebrandt is of the view that Divodāsa was originally a native of Arachosia and the incidents connected with Divodāsa's career described in *maṇḍala* VI of the Rigveda by Ṛṣi Bharadvāja took place in Iran. On the other hand Rahul Sankrityayana holds that Divodāsa was born on the banks of the Indian Sarasvatī during his father's campaign in and conquest of *Brahmāvarta*. Rahul compares the father and son with Philip and Alexander the Great respectively and says that Divodāsa like Alexander put into shade the greatness of his father by the magnificence of his own exploits. In this connection we are reminded of the epithet *Ṛṇamchyuta* applied to Divodāsa (RV. VI. 61, 1) which has been rightly interpreted as "one who has discharged his debts". In our view this only signifies that Divodāsa had freed himself from what Indian tradition calls *Pitṛ-ṛṇa* or the debt due to one's father. An Indian son does not put his father's greatness into shade but enhances it by himself becoming greater than his father.

In our opinion it is possible to reconcile the two apparently opposite views expressed above. Vadhrāśva may have established himself in *Brahmāvarta* and left his son to rule over the ancestral domain in the Ghazni-Kandahar region of Iran of those times. However, as it has happened so many times in Indian history, the far off territories in Iran could not be held for long from India. Divodāsa was defeated by 'Kavi' Huśravā and Arachosia passed into the hands of the Kayanian dynasty. This must have been the reason for Divodāsa's arrival in India to join his father in *Brahmāvarta*.

Hillebrandt has also expressed the view that Divodāsa

himself belonged to the tribe of the Dāsas, or Dahae as his name itself indicates. This will turn Divodāsa into a Śaka or Scythian, as the Dāsas or Dahae were a powerful branch of the Scythian tribe. However, this would not make Divodāsa a non-Aryan as the Śakas themselves were Aryans. It is said that one of the clans of the Indian community of Jats is called Dahae and it is well-known that even ethnographically the claim of the Jats to being Aryans cannot be denied.

Divodāsa's career in India is crowded with events. In order to push his conquests towards the south-east it was necessary for him to safeguard his position on the west, where the Yadus and Turvasus held sway. That he succeeded in establishing his supremacy over them is manifest from a Rigvedic hymn (VII. 19, 8) which states that Indra brought Turvasu and Yadu under Divodāsa's control. This event and the fact that there were Bhārata principalities spread over the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab and even up to Kāsī must have made it easy for Divodāsa to become the overlord of the entire Gangetic plain upto Vārāṇasī.

Divodāsa's main exploit was his victory over Saṁbara. He had to wage a long war which is said to have lasted for forty years, resulting in a great slaughter of the Dāsas. There is a consensus of opinion among Vedic scholars that Śaṁbar's territory was situated in the Punjab hills. Rahul Sankrityayana goes a step further and locates the scene of the battle in the Kangra hills of the Himalayas on the ground that the Bhāratas were in occupation of the nearby lands round about the river Sarasvatī and Paruṣṇī (Ravi). This location is based purely on conjecture. On the other hand the *Ramayana* of Vālmīki gives the personal name of Śaṁbara as Timidhvaja, names his capital as Vaijayanta and definitely locates it in the Daṇḍaka forest. This shifts the scene of the Śaṁbara-war from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhya hills in the south. This also explains how Daśaratha of Ayodhya joined the battle as an ally of Divodāsa as stated in the *Ramayana*. It would then have to be admitted that Divodāsa, and not

Rama, was the first to penetrate the Daṇḍaka forest and that Ikṣvāku Rama only completed the work done by the Bhārata Divodāsa.

The Puranas also make Ahalyā, who was seduced by Indra and deserted by her husband Gautama Śaradvaṅta, the sister of Divodāsa. We give below an extract from S. N. Pradhan's *Chronology of Ancient India* which establishes beyond doubt the contemporaneity of Daśaratha and Divodāsa and the location of the battle with Śaṁbara in Daṇḍaka forest : "Now the tradition about Ahalyā having been visited by Rāma Daśarathi, is a most important event that supplies us with the synchronism between Aikṣvāka Daśaratha and Atithigva Divodāsa—a synchronism so essential for the rational construction of India's ancient history. When Śrī Rāmachandra, the descendant of Manu Vaivasvata, and the heir to one of the most famous Aryan dynasties, came to the hermitage of Gautama and accepted the hospitality of Ahalyā, all her social blame was considered to be removed, and Gautama accepted her back as his wife. This shows how the stricter conception of chastity had not yet dawned upon the Aryan society."

"There is a second reason for the synchronism between Daśaratha and Divodāsa. In the *Ramayana* we find that Daśaratha together with other Rājarṣis proceededs toward the south to fight against Śaṁbara who used to live in a city named Vaijayanta, the capital of Śaṁbara's territory, lying adjacent to the forest of Daṇḍaka. Once during the progress of the battle which seems to have lasted for several weeks, the soldiers of Śaṁbara made a night attack on, and killed many of, the Aryan soldiers, by forcibly throwing them out of their beds on which the latter were sleeping after being wounded and tired in their day's fight. In that nocturnal fight the Aryans were almost ousted but for Daśaratha who fiercely engaged the soldiers of Śaṁbara with the result that the king of Ayodhyā received several wounds on his body and lay unconscious in his chariot which was being driven by his

wife Kaikeyī. She saved her husband's life by driving the chariot out of the battle-field. Daśaratha promised Kaikeyī two boons which were the ultimate causes of the exile of Rama. Mark the word *Rājarṣibhiḥ* in the 11th *śloka* referred to and mark also the appellation *Rājarṣi* which the Puranas have always given to Atithigva Divodāsa, and remember that Abhyāvartin, Prastoka and Divodāsa were contemporaries and belonged to the same family. Consider again the evidence of the Brahma Purana from which we learn that when Daśaratha, the great Ikṣvāku king ruled in Ayodhyā there was a great battle between the Devas and Dānavas for the possession of kingdoms in this country. Daśaratha was invited to fight on the side of Devas. The Dānavas who were the kinsmen of Namuci, shot with sharp arrows the axle of Daśaratha's chariot which was driven by his wife Kaikeyī, although the axle was broken by the shooting of enemy's arrows. The *Ramayana* seems to preserve some historical truth when it says that the enemy's personal name was Timidhvaja and that he was titled as Śaṁbara, so that his full name was Timidhvaja Śaṁbara. The Rigveda gives us the name of his ancestor as Kulitara. Pradyumna, the son of Śrīkṛṣṇa, killed another Śaṁbara whose full name was Kāla-Śaṁbara. It appears from all this that in the great war, in which ninety-nine towns of Timidhvaja Śaṁbara, the descendant of Kulitara, were destroyed and the hundredth town taken by storm, Daśaratha Ājeya was invited by and became the ally of Atithigva Divodāsa."[13]

It would appear that after the career of Divodāsa had come to an end, the other family of the Bhāratas, descended from Devavāta and led by Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, gained the supreme position. They too had to fight the Turvasus aided by the Vṛchivatas and as already stated defeated them near Hariyūpīyā.

At this stage in the history of the Bhāratas Sṛñjaya's grandson Sudāsa started gaining importance. He was backed by Viśvāmitra of the kingdom of Kānyakubja, who was both a

ruler and a priest. Under Viśvāmitra's guidance as his priest, Sudāsa decided to perform Aśvamedha. Aśvamedha or the horse-sacrifice ceremony used to be performed only by a king who felt himself strong enough to assert his supremacy over the rulers of neighbouring principalities. A Rigvedic verse (III. 53, II) speaks of Sudāsa's Aśvamedha, which seems to have passed off peacefully. Sudāsa's victory over the king of Kīkaṭa or Magadha may or may not be connected with the horse-sacrifice but what is certain is that it was gained while Viśvāmitra was his priest.

The horse-sacrifice resulting in Sudāsa's becoming the supreme ruler of his time must have lowered the position of Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, who had so far been recognised as the *Samrāṭ*. Abhyāvartin must have felt as Duryodhana did after Yudhisthira's Rājasūya sacrifice. To protect his authority Abhyāvartin appears to have joined hands with the five Aila tribes, namely, the Yadus, Turvasus, Anus, Druhyus and Purus, all descended from Yayāti's five sons. Perhaps hopes of booty induced five other tribes of the Afghan border, named as Pakthus, Bhalanasas, Visanius, Alinas and Śivas. Among these the Pakthus have been rightly identified with the Pakhtoons. The Bhalanases are supposed to be connected with the Bolan pass. About the other three tribes nothing definite is known. In this hour of crisis Viśvāmitra also left Sudāsa, and joined hands with his opponents. It has been asserted by some scholars that Viśvāmitra's desertion was caused by Sudāsa's appointment of Vaśiṣṭha as his priest. It seems to us more likely that the quarrel between Sudāsa and Abhyāvartin being merely a family feud Viśvāmitra decided in favour of the elderly Abhyāvartin and that it was only when Viśvāmitra had left him that Sudāsa turned to Vaśiṣṭha for succour and made him his priest. This is proved by Vaśiṣṭha using the adjectives 'pauper' and 'goat' for Sudāsa in a hymn which gives an eye-witness account of the Dāśa-rājña battle. The hymn runs thus :

"The adorable Indra made the well-known deep waters

(of the Parushni) fordable for Sudas, and converted the vehement awakening imprecation of the sacrificer into the calumniation of the rivers."

"Turvasha, who was preceding (at solemn rites), diligent in sacrifice, (went to Sudas) for wealth ; but like fishes restricted (to the element of water), the Bhrigus and Druhyus quickly assailed them : of these two everywhere going, the friend (of Sudas, Indra) rescued his friend."

"Those who dress the oblation, those who pronounce auspicious words, those who abstain from penance, those who bear horns (in their hands), those who bestow happiness (on the world by sacrifice), glorify that Indra, who recovered the cattle of the Arya from the plunderers, who slew the enemies in battle."

"The evil-disposed and stupid (enemies of Sudas), crossing the humble Parushni river, have broken down its banks ; but he by his greatness pervades the earth, and Kavi, the son of Chayamana, like a failing victim, sleeps (in death)."

"The waters followed their regular course to the Parushni, nor (wandered) beyond it : the quick courser (of the king) came to the accessible places, and Indra made the idly-talking enemies, with their numerous progeny, subject among men (to Sudas)."

"They who ride on parti-coloured cattle, (the Maruts), despatched by Prishni, and recalling the engagement made by them with their friend (Indra), came like cattle from the pasturage, when left without a herdsman ; the exulting Niyut steeds brought them quickly (against the foe)."

"The hero Indra created the Maruts (for the assistance of the Raja), who, ambitious of fame, slew one-and-twenty of the men on the two banks (of the Parushni) as a well-looking priest lops the sacred grass in the chamber of sacrifice."

"Thou, the bearer of the thunderbolt, didst drown Shruta, Kawasha, Vriddha, and afterwards Druhyu, in the waters : for they, Indra, who are devoted to thee, and glorify thee, preferring thy friendship, enjoy it."

"Indra, in his might, quickly demolished all their strongholds, and their seven (kinds of) cities: he has given the dwelling of the son of Anu to Tritsu: may we, (by propitiating Indra), conquer in battle the ill-speaking man."

"The warriors of the Anus and Druhyus, intending (to carry off the) cattle, (hostile) to the pious (Sudas), perished to the number of sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty: such are all the glorious acts of Indra."

"These hostile Tritsus, ignorantly contending with Indra, fled, routed as rapidly as rivers on a downward course, and being discomfited, abandoned all their possessions to Sudas."

"Indra has scattered over the earth the hostile rival of the hero (Sudas), the senior of Indra, the appropriator of the oblation: Indra has baffled the wrath of the wrathful enemy, and the (foe) advancing on the way (against Sudas) has taken the path of flight."

"Indra has effected a valuable (donation) by a pauper: he has slain an old lion by a goat: he has cut the angles of the sacrificial post with a needle: he has given all the spoils (of the enemy) to Sudas."[14]

In the verse that follows Vaśiṣṭha mentions Bheda, another enemy of Sudasa in the following words :

"Thy numerous enemies, Indra, have been reduced to subjection: effect at some time or other the subjugation of the turbulent Bheda, who holds men praising thee as guilty of wickedness; hurl thy sharp thunderbolt against him."

And Indra did hurl his sharp thunderbolt against Bheda as, soon after the *Dāśarājña*, Sudāsa defeated him on the river Yamuna with his confederates the Ajas, Śigrus and Yakṣus, regarded as Dāsa tribes. It appears that on the eve of the *Dāśarājña* battle Bheda and his allies had advanced against Sudāsa to attack him from behind but a quick victory on the Ravi enabled Sudāsa to turn back and defeat them with even greater slaughter.

The importance given to Sudāsa as a conqueror on the

basis of the hymns of the Rigveda and the later Vedic literature is not supported by the Puranas and the *Mahabharata*. It appears that this is due to the hostility of the Bhārgavas and the descendants of Viśvāmitra who contributed most to the Puranic and Epic traditions. It is well-known that Viśvāmitra, styled as *Bhārata-ṛṣabha* (the best among the Bhāratas) was, besides being the ruler of the principality of Kānyakubja, a priest of Sudāsa. Sudāsa replaced him by Vaśiṣṭha and thus Viśvāmitra seems to have become not only an enemy of Vaśiṣṭha, which is well-known but also of Sudāsa. This is borne out by the hymns of the Rigveda.

It is alleged that his victories made Sudāsa haughty and that the Saudāsas (Sudās's sons or followers), instigated by Viśvāmitra killed Vaśiṣṭha's son Śakti. We have not been told specifically as to how Sudāsa's career ended. That there was some misfortune seems certain as he was succeeded by his uncle Suplā Sahadeva. Sahadeva's son was Somaka. According to some scholars it was during the reign of Somaka that the five tribes descended from Bhārata combined to form the kingdom of Pañchāla which came to be divided into northern Pañchāla and southern Pañchāla with Ahichhatrā and Kāmpilya as their respective capitals. After Somaka there occurs a gap in the genealogy of the Bhāratas with which we shall deal in the next chapter.

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Chapter
Six

The Kurus

According to the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* the Kurus were as much the descendants of the Bhāratas as the latter were of the Purus. We have already given our reasons for disconnecting the Bhāratas from the Purus and treating them as a fresh wave of Aryan invaders. We think that we are on equally firm ground in dissociating the Kurus from the Bhāratas and treating them as yet another stream of Aryan entrants into India.

We have already noted the wide gap in the genealogy that separated Duṣyanta, the first Bhārata king, from the Puru Taṁśa. We have a similar gap in the combined genealogy of the Bhāratas and Kurus. The genealogy given by F.E. Pargiter omits a number of kings first between Ajamīḍha and Ṛkṣa I and then between Ṛkṣa I and Saṁvaraṇa. S.N. Pradhan has constructed an inteligible geneallogy, but in spite of all the trouble taken, he too has been forced to leave quite a big gap. P.L. Bhargava not only admits this wide gap between the Bhāratas and the Kurus but says in plain words that the latter were cut off from the former "by a long duration of time and practically formed a new dynasty".[1]

According to the Puranic and Epic tradition Saṁvaraṇa, the father of Kuru, was one of the kings of Hastināpur and he was defeated and driven out of it by a king of Pañchāla. As the name of the Pañchāla king has not been mentioned anywhere, it leaves open a wide field for various conjectures. What is significant is that after his flight from Hastināpur Saṁvaraṇa took shelter in an island on

the river Indus. This leads us to suspect that a new people invaded India from the western side of the Indus under the leadership of one Saṁvaraṇa. Their attack was repulsed by the Pañchālas who were evidently Bhāratas, and the invaders retired across the Indus. But just as Mohammad of Ghor, who after his defeat by Prithviraj had retreated to his country and had prepared for a second attack which succeeded, similarly Saṁvaraṇa also might have returned and gathered fresh forces for a second attack. This time he too succeeded and settled down in Hastināpur which he must have wrested from the Bhāratas. He was followed by his more renowned son Kuru, after whom the old Brahmāvarta came to be called Kurukṣetra and its rulers as the Kurus.

If the Kurus are to be treated as new Aryan entrants the question will naturally arise as to where they came from. As in the previous chapters we have often mentioned Uttarakuru, this question will naturally carry the mind of even a non-specialist reader to the lands beyond the Pamir. In our first chapter we have defined Uttarakuru as the vast tract extending from the Pamir almost to the Arctic Ocean. In his work entitled *India and the World*, Dr. Buddha Prakash remarks that "the whole expanse of land between the Himalayas and the Arctic regions was denoted by this term Uttarakuru."[2] Dr. Buddha Prakash in his monograph *Rigveda and the Indus Valley Civilization*, restricts it to Chinese Turkistan or Sinkiang. However, what is important is that Dr. Buddha Prakash connects the Kurus of Kurukṣetra with Uttarakurus and states : "One of their sections reached Iran, swept through the corridor between the southern foot of the Elburz Range and the northern pasture lands in the basin of lake Urmiyah and, beyond that, in the steppe country in the lower basin of the rivers Aras and Kur, adjoining the west coast of the Caspian Sea. From there they travelled on still further westward over the watershed between the basins of the Aras and the Qyzyl Irmaq (Halys) and debouched into the Anatolian Peninsula to settle

in the region, called the Kuru Plain, Koroupedion, after their name, which, like its Indian counterpart, Kurukṣetra, was the scene of memorable battles, like those between Seleucos Nicator and Lysimachus in 281 B.C. and the Romans and Antiochus III in 190 B.C., which decided the fate of empires in that region. Another detachment of the Kurus found its way to Luristan and joined the early Achaemenids, as is clear from the fact that two kings of the Parśuwaś Anśān branch of the Achaemenian family of Iran were named Kuru. A third wing of these people swung to the south-east and through Bactriana and the Hindu Kush moved into the Punjab and occupied the Sarasvati-Yamuna region. It is significant that one section of the Kurus, called Prātipeyas, is known as Bālhīka."[3]

If we accept this view we have to look upon the Kurus as a branch of the Uttarakurus, which constituted perhaps the last wave of Aryan entrants into India during the Vedic period. The Rigveda mentions only one Kuru king named Śāntanu, the father of Bhīṣma and Śāntanu's elder brother Devāpi who had become a Ṛṣi. It is only in the Brāhmaṇas that we come across other names and the glorification of the dynasty. The conclusion drawn by scholars that the collection of the hymns of the Rigveda in its present form had been completed before the Mahābhārata war appears to be correct, as Vyāsa the son of Parāśara who collected the hymns, is credited with the division of the Veda into four parts known as *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, *Sāman* and *Atharva*. He was not only a contemporary of the Pandavas but also their grand father.

If we adopt Pradhan's reconstructed genealogy of the Kurus we find that upto Pandu, the father of Pandavas, about twenty kings had reigned over the Kuru realm. However, most of these kings are mere names. Kuru's son and grandson Pariksit I and Janamejaya I were important rulers. Pariksit is praised in the *Atharvaveda* and in a number of the *Brāhmaṇas*. We give below a song from the

Atharva Veda (20-127, 7-10) composed in his praise, perhaps as a *dāna-stuti* :

"Listen ye to the high praise of the king who rules over all peoples, the god who is above mortals, of Vaiśvānara Parīkṣit!"

"'Parīkṣit has procured for us a secure dwelling, when he the most excellent one, went to his seat.' (Thus) the husband in Kuru-land, when he founds his household, converses with his wife."

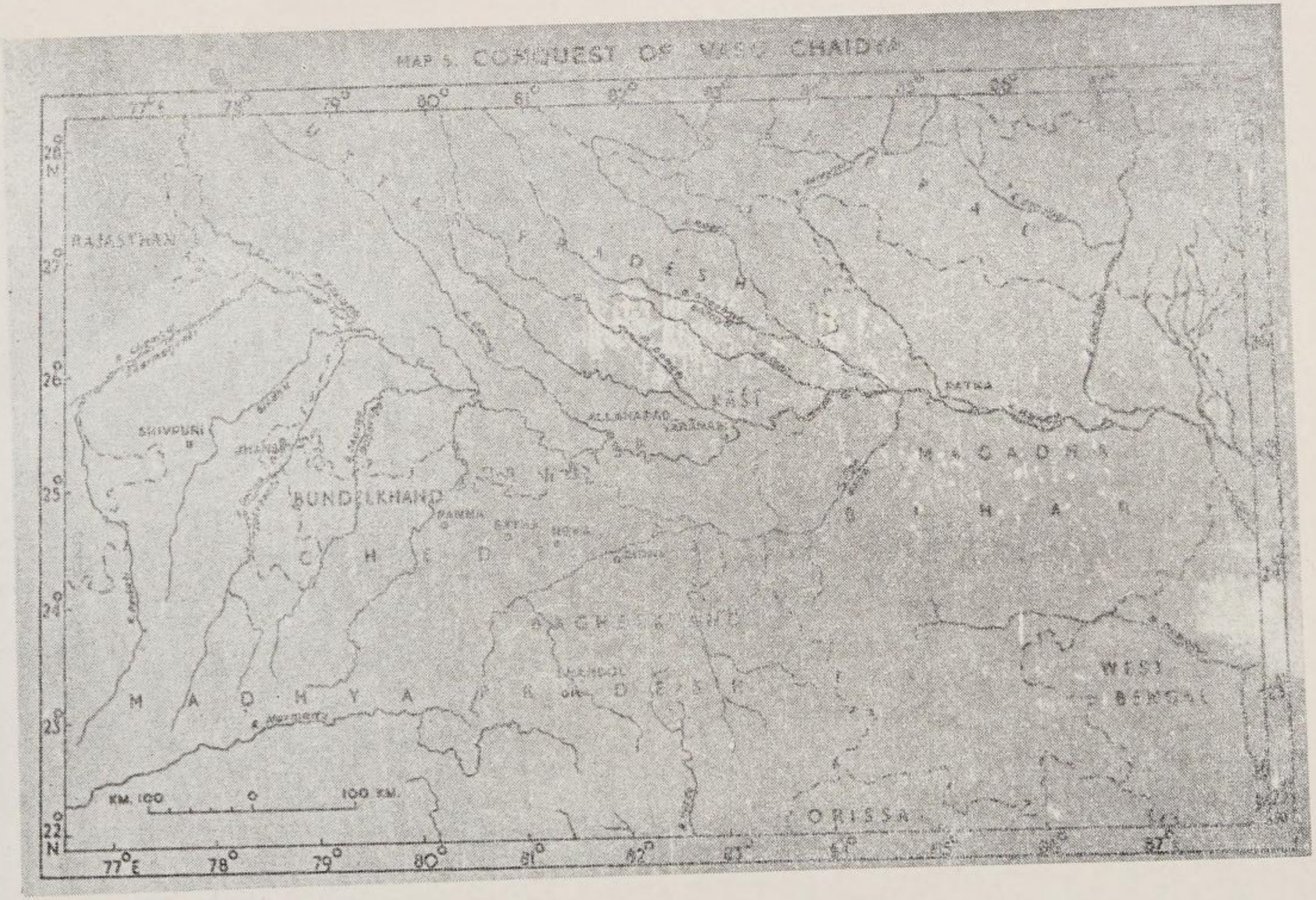
"'What may I bring to thee, curds, stirred drink, or liquor?' Thus the wife asks her husband in the kingdom of king Parīkṣit."[4]

Janamejaya I has been mentioned in the *Śatapatha* (13, 5, 4, 1) and *Aitareya* (7, 34; 8, 11; 21) *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Sānkhyāyana Śrautra Sūtra* (16.8.27). He is said to have killed the son of Gārgya incurring the sin of *brahma-hatyā*, which is said to have resulted in his abdication.

There is nothing worth noticing about Janamejaya's successors till we come to Pratīpa who raised the prestige of his dynasty. Pratīpa had three sons : Devāpi, Vāhlika and Śāntanu. As Devāpi was afflicted with leprosy his claims were passed over. Vāhlika too contented himself with lands inherited from his maternal uncle in the western Punjab in the realm of the Śivis. As already stated, Devāpi became a Ṛṣi and he has been mentioned along with Śāntanu in a Rigvedic hymn (Rg. X. 98). This hymn confirms the Puranic account that there was prolonged famine in the Kuru country and the rains came only when Devāpi, at the request of his royal brother, performed a sacrifice for him. Śāntanu has been credited by the Puranas with skill as a physician.

We need not go into the well-known story of Śāntanu's marriage with Satyavatī resulting in his son Devavrata giving up his claim on the Kuru throne and promising not to marry in order to facilitate the undisputed succession of Śāntanu's sons born of Satyavatī. Owing to these harsh and solemn resolutions made before his father he came

MAP 5. CONQUEST OF VEST CHAIDYA



to be called Bhīṣma. *Bhīṣma-pratijñā* or Bhīṣma's resolve has come to signify an unalterable resolution or promise. Bhīṣma has become equally famous for heroism and wisdom. As to his heroism besides his ten days' fight in the Mahabharata war as the first commander of Duryodhana's forces, he is said to have defeated Ugrāyudha, an all-conquering Pañchāla hero, when he attacked the Kuru realm. Bhīṣma's fight with Paraśurāma is obviously fictitious, but the myth does go to show what a high regard his countrymen of later generations had for his valour. His hold on the peoples' mind is evidenced by the fact that the 8th day in the light half of the month of Māgha is observed as a festival in honour of Bhīṣma and is called *Bhīṣmāṣṭamī*.

Śāntanu's sons Vichitravĭrya and Chitrāṅgada did not live long to enjoy the throne renounced by Bhīṣma. Vichitravīrya's sons were Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pandu, regarded as *Kṣetraja* by Vyāsa Pārāśara. As the rest of the story relating to the quarrel between the Kurus, born of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Pandavas, born of Pandu, leading to the disastrous war on the battle-field of Kurukṣetra is well-known we stop here and take notice of the other kingdom established by the Kurus.

According to the Puranas and the *Mahabharata* one of the descendants of Kuru, the first king of the Kuru royal family was one Vasu who attacked the Chedi region or Bundelkhand and, after defeating its Yādava rulers, established himself there. He is said to have been a favourite of Indra and is styled both as a *Samrāṭ* and a *Chakravartin*. He is better known as Vasu Chaidyoparichara or Vasu, the overcomer of Chedi. He seems to have conquered some other tracts which he divided among his five sons. As a result of his wide conquests five Kuru kingdoms of Chedi, Magadha, Kauśāmbī, Kārūṣa and Matsya came into existence. Leaving aside Matsya, which was very much to the north of Chedi it will be noticed that all the other kingdoms lay to the east of Bundelkhand. Kauśāmbi is near Allahabad, to which

the Kauravas retired a few generations after the Mahabharata war. Kārūṣa was the valley of the river Sone, which comprised the eastern part of the present Rewa Division in Madhya Pradesh, known as Baghelkhand and the adjoining districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar. Śiśupāla, Dantavakra and Jarāsandha were respectively the rulers of Chedi, Kārūṣa and Magadha on the eve of the Mahabharata war.

It would thus be seen that the Yādavas, who had dominated the lands from the Indus to Vidarbha across the Narmada and had unsuccessfully tried to establish themselves in the Ganga plain, lost their supreme position, which passed to the Kurus. The Kurus were now in possession of the territories from the Sutlej to Allahabad i.e., the whole of Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab and beyond that tracts extending from Bundelkhand in the west to Magadha in the east.

However, it is not the Kurus of Hastināpura who continued to be the overlords of all lands occupied by the descendants of Kuru. Amongst the newly founded kingdoms Magadha gradually became dominant and under Jarāsandha came to occupy the foremost place in Aryan India. Jarāsandha married his two daughters to Kaṁsa of Mathurā, and pushed up his influence to the upper Ganga Valley. When Kṛṣṇa killed Kaṁsa he was attacked by Jarāsandha and the Yādavas had to migrate to Dwārkā in Ānarta (Gujarat) abandoning Mathurā. The *Mahabharata* says that Jarāsandha had formed a confederacy of kings styled *Rājachakra*, of which *Śiśupāla* and Dantavakra alongwith many other rulers were prominent members. Those who refused to join the *Rājachakra* were attacked and it is said that 86 kings had been imprisoned by Jarāsandha for the performance of human sacrifice before his favourite deity Śiva. If the kings of Hastināpur were spared the humiliation it was entirely due to the fame of Bhīṣma both as a warrior and as a statesman.

This situation seems to have changed for a brief period

of time when the Pandavas founded Indraprastha and Kṛṣṇa became their ally. When Yudhisthira wanted to celebrate the Rājasūya sacrifice, Kṛṣṇa gave him a detailed account of the military power and prestige of Jarāsandha and the terror that he had created in the hearts of the rulers of different parts of India. Kṛṣṇa admitted that he himself had to leave Mathurā and settle in Dwārakā on account of Jarāsandha's repeated invasions and that his own relatives had deserted him and attached themselves to his enemy. In Kṛṣṇa's own words Kurus were spared the humiliation by the prowess of Bhīṣma and Andhaka Vṛśṇi Yādavas by prudence.[5] This frightened Yudhisthira. He was about to give up his ambition to celebrate the Rājasūya, when Kṛṣṇa proposed to him a plan for inducing Jarāsandha to a duel with Arjuna or Bhīma. Accordingly Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by the two Pandavas repaired to Girivraja and Jarāsandha was killed by Bhīma in a duel. His principal ally Śiśupāla of Chedi was killed by Kṛṣṇa himself soon after on the occasion of the Rājasūya. Another ally, king Bhauma of Prāgjyotiṣapura situated in Assam also met his death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. The sons of Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and Bhauma submitted to their victors and eastern India came under the domination of the Pāṇḍavas. The *digvijaya* of Karṇa on behalf of Duryodhana and the two digvijayas of Pandavas before and after the Mahabharata war confirmed the supremacy which the Pandavas had achieved with the active support of Kṛṣṇa.

The epic *Mahabharata*, which relates the glory of the Kurus, has been so enlarged in its scope that the picture of India as painted by it should not be taken to apply literally to the conditions prevailing at the time of the Kurukṣetra war. It seems to have been composed by Vyāsa under the name of 'Jaya' but was added to and named Bhārata by Vaiśampāyana. It became *Mahabharata* at the hands of the Bhārgavas, who are said to have Iranised it by incorporating in it ideas from their original home.

A number of theories have been propounded in regard

to the Mahabharata war but the strangest interpretation is by Robert Shafer in his work *Ethnography of Ancient India*. He begins his monograph with the following paragraphs :

"The Great Epic of India is essentially the story of native rebellion against Aryan exploitation."

"The whole background of the war of the *Mahabharata* is told very simply in the Digvijaya subparvan and a few chapters of the Dyuta subparvan of the Sabhāparvan. In the first, the four brothers of Yudhisthira set out and force the Aryan countries to acknowledge Yudhisthira's overlordship and they conquer all the other nations and tribes of India. In the second, the countries—particularly the non-Aryan countries—are forced to pay exhorbitant tribute to Yudhisthira."

"The king of Kamboja—innumerable skins of best quality, woollen blankets, blankets of soft fur inlaid with threads of gold, 300 horses, 300 camels, 300 she-asses fattened with olives and pilusa."

"Sudra, kings on the seacoast-hundreds of thousands of serving girls of beautiful features, waist, and hair, and decked with golden ornaments; also skins."

"Tribes of Vaiyamakas, Paradas, Tungas, Kitavas, and others—goats, kine, asses, camels, vegetable, honey, blankets, jewels and gems."

"King of Prāgjyotiṣa—horses of the best breed and with the speed of wind; swords with handles of ivory and adorned with diamonds and gems."

"All these are minor tribes living on the outskirts of the empire, so one may gain some idea of the tribute brought. And although it was enormous, the rulers and their retinues were kept waiting at the palace gate until they brought 'fitting tribute' before they could enter the palace."

"Is it any wonder that the native peoples of higher culture, living in fortified cities and towns, rebelled against the Aryan horde of beef-gorging, soma-swilling warriors and

cattle raiders, whose kings still spent much of their time wandering in the hills and hunting in the forests, and whose chief claim to be called civilized was a love of bathing and fighting? The Aryans knew so little about governing that they enslaved or degraded the masses and exploited the persons of wealth and position to the point where the native economy was disrupted and the Great Rebellion of the *Mahabharata* broke out. In missing this point scholars have misunderstood the whole background of the war of the *Mahabharata*."[6]

All this is nothing short of fanciful interpretation. Shafer seems to forget that the *Mahabharata* is a poetical composition. On the pretext of describing the tributes brought by the rulers of different regions the poet is merely describing the products of those regions and has thus made a useful contribution to our geographical knowledge.

In regard to his comparison between the 'native people of higher cultures living in fortified cities and towns' and the 'Aryan hordes of beef-gorging, Soma-swilling warriors and cattle-raiders' who 'knew so little about governing', all that need be said is that so much time had elapsed between the end of the Harappā civilization and the Mahabharata war that whatever cultural gap might have existed between the Harappans and the Aryans had been bridged and a civilization had come into existence of which both were the authors and beneficiaries. It does not do credit to any historian of ancient India to go on repeating the remarks of Stuart Piggot in respect of a whole race. The Aryan rulers not only knew how to govern in the interest of their people but also were architects of a polity which served as a model for their successors for centuries to come. The Mahabharata war was the result of the family feud between the sons of two brothers Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pandu in which friends and relations naturally became involved and it would be wholly inaccurate to call it a revolt of the non-Aryans against the Aryans.

As a result of the war Yudhisthira ascended the Kuru

throne and the Pandavas shifted from Indraprastha to Hastināpur, the ancestral capital. Pariksita succeeded Yudhisthira and was killed by Takṣaka, a chieftain of the Nagas, who probably belonged to Punjab. The Nagas, we have observed in a previous chapter, were an ancient people. Janamejaya, the son of Pariksita, invaded Takṣaśilā, presumably the capital-city of the Takṣaka branch of the Nagas and tried to exterminate the entire people to avenge his father's death, but was at the last moment persuaded by Ṛṣi Astika to refrain from the dreadful act. It was when Janamejaya was at Takṣaśilā that Vaiśampāyana, a disciple of Vyāsa, related the *Bharata* or (the revised version of the Epic) to the king. Nichakṣu, the fourth descendant of Janamejaya, was forced to abandon Hastināpur as a result of a flood in the Ganga and to migrate to Kauśāmbī near Allahabad, where the Kuru line of kings was continued under the name of *Pauravas*. The assumption of the name '*Paurava*' by the Kurus of Kauśāmbï was natural enough, as by the time they arrived in Kauśāmbĭ the legend of the Bhāratas and Kurus having descended from the Purus had been already propagated. But Pargiter does not believe the flood to have been the cause of the migration of the Kurus. He says : "The explanation is inadequate, because, if that were the whole truth, he could have chosen some other town near by as a new capital, and there was no necessity to move more than 300 miles south across South Pañchāla to Kauśāmbī. Manifestly he was obliged to abandon all the northern part of the Ganges-Jumna doab, and there can be no doubt that he was driven south by pressure from the Punjab." 'The pressure from the Punjab' can only be a conjecture as Pargiter does not identify the people from whom this pressure emanated. We may rule out the Nagas because Janamejaya had annexed the Punjab and occupied Takṣaśilā. He is said to have been in a position to exterminate the entire Naga race but had refrained from doing so at the request of a learned Brahmin. No other people are reported

to have attacked the Ganga valley from the side of the Punjab. On the other hand the Pañchālas, who are almost invariably coupled with the Kurus in the later Vedic literature, continued to remain in and rule over the northern and southern Pañchāla. If the flooding of Hastināpur is not to be accepted as the reason for the migration of the Kurus to Kauśāmbī, then the 'pressure from the Punjab' theory seems equally untenable. If the Kurus had really become weak they could have as well been pushed to the south by the Pañchālas, their neighbours.

There can be yet another reason for this migration. As already mentioned, four other Kuru kingdoms had been founded, viz. Kauśāmbī, Chedi, Kārūṣa and Magadha and the Kurus of Hastināpur may have preferred to reside at a place close to these realms to exercise control over them. What completely vitiates 'the pressure from the Punjab' theory is that when paramountcy departed from the upper Ganga valley it did not shift towards the Punjab but came to reside in Magadha for about a millennium. The Kurus may have sensed this shift and might have made Kauśāmbī their capital to be in a better position to check it.

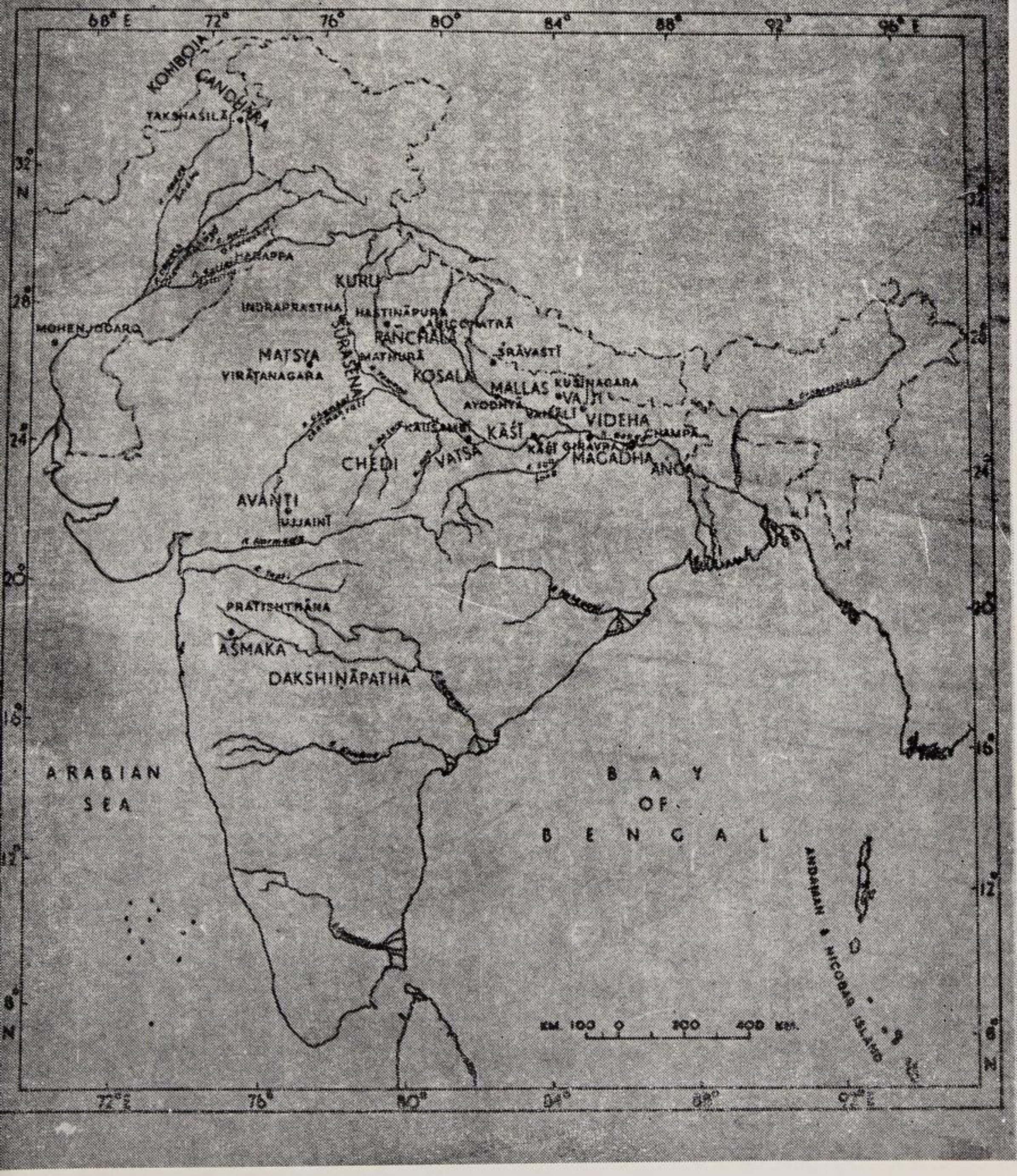
However, if the Kurus came to Kauśāmbī to prevent the rise of Magadha to a supreme position they utterly failed in their mission. Magadha had risen once before at the time of Jarāsandha and the setback given to it by the Pandavas proved to be temporary. In our view there were two compelling factors which were quietly working in favour of Magadha. The Ganga was easily navigable upto the cities of Magadha situated on its banks and the trade with the countries of south east Asia through the port of Tāmralipti was carried on through Ganga. Apart from the Paṇis of the Indus valley the merchant class does notfind a prominent place in the Rigveda or later Vedic literature. However, traders grew in importance in later years and we begin to hear of their guilds and their enormous wealth

and influence. The second factor must have been the availability of iron ore in the vicinity of Magadha. Iron Age had just dawned and this inexhaustible ore must have very much enhanced both the wealth and fighting capacity of Magadha. This supremacy of Magadha, which had once been achieved in the reign of Jarāsandha, re-asserted itself and stayed there for about a millennium till Harsavardhana achieved the supreme position in the 7th century A.D. and made Kanauj, the seat of imperial power.

This shifting of paramountcy towards the east should not be interpreted as the enslavement of the northeners or even an encroachment upon their autonomy. Jarāsandha had tried to destroy the autonomy of the *Janapadas* and had consequently lost his life in the attempt. The experiment was not adhered to till the time of Mahāpadma Nanda, who came to the throne of Magadha as late as the fourth century B.C. Between the Mahabharata war and achievement of power by Mahāpadma Nanda, who is said to have destroyed all the Kṣatriyas, centuries had elapsed. During this long period 24 Kosalas, 27 Pañchālas, 24 Kāśīs, 28 Haihayas, 32 Kaliṅgas, 25 Aśmakas, 36 Kurus, 28 Maithilas, 23 Śūrasenas and 20 Vītihotras are said to have reigned in their respective regions. The Puranas have given complete lists of the kings of only the Kosalas, Kurus and Magadhas. In addition we have a list of more than a hundred *Janapadas*, the southernmost being Aśmaka on the Godāvarī and the northern-most Vāhlīka and Kamboja near the river Oxus beyond the Hindukush. Out of these *Janapadas* sixteen have been designated as *Mahājanapadas* which are as follows :

1. Aṅga or east Bihar
2. Magadha or south Bihar
3. Kāśī or Vārāṇasī
4. Kosala or Oudh

MAP 6. THE SIXTEEN JANAPADAS



5. Vṛji or north Bihar
6. Malla or Gorakhpur Deoria districts
7. Chedi or Bundelkhand
8. Vatsa or Allahabad-Baghelkhand region
9. Kuru or Delhi and Meerut districts
10. Pañchāla or Rohilakhand and Kanauj region
11. Matsya or Jaipur-Alwar
12. Śūrasena or Mathurā
13. Aśmaka or Godāvarī region
14. Avanti or Western Malwa
15. Gaṅdhāra or Peshawar and Rawalpindi district
16. Kamboja or Badakhshān region

As this list also includes Gandhāra and Kamboja we may conclude that south-eastern Iran, Afghanistan and Baluchistan continued to be parts of India during this period, as they were in the Vedic age. Nay, as the language of the Uttarakurus was considered to be the purest and allied to that of the Kuru-pañchālas we may push the boundaries of Aryan-dom further into Central Asia. Says Pusalker: "Finally we come to the Udīchyas or Northerners among whom are the Uttarakurus, the Uttaramadras, Mūjavants, Mahāvrishas, Gandhāris, Bāhlīkas, Keśins, Kekayas, and Kāmbojas."

"The Udīchya dialect was celebrated for its purity; hence Brāhmaṇas flocked to the north for purposes of study. The northern dialect resembled that of the Kuru-Pañchāla, and the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas of the north is indicated by the victory of one of their spokesmen over a Kuru-Pañchāla Brāhmaṇa in a debate. The celebrity enjoyed by the north in academic matters is further corroborated by the fact that Taxila became a famous seat of learning, and classical Sanskrit was first developed in Kashmir."[8]

It is unfortunate that we have almost no information about

the doings of even the famous kings of this long period of our history, only a few of them having been mentioned in the later Vedic literature in connection with discussions regarding rituals or philosophical discourses. The view that the post-Mahabharata period constituted the age of degeneracy in the character of the Indo-Aryans and of decline in the history of India seems to be utterly baseless. The heroic age was over and the people seem to have settled down to engage themselves in peaceful pursuits. As has always happened, freedom from foreign invasions had enabled the people to produce wealth for which ancient India had become famous throughout the world. The rise of Jainism and Buddhism should be looked upon merely as an effort on the part of the people to adjust their religious and social ideas to the changed circumstance of their lives. A war-like Aryan people seeking a new home had required a god of the type of Indra to lead them to victory over those who resisted them. On the other hand a settled Aryan people engaged in peaceful pursuits of agriculture and trade required a Buddha, calmly seated preaching non-violence and good neighbourliness. It was a transition from one way of life to another and was peacefully achieved. It also necessitated admission of the conquered into Aryan society. The process began with the Upaniṣads and was completed with the rise and success of Buddhism. As had happened earlier during the peak of the Harappan civilization, this new civilization also crossed the Himalayas and flooded Central Asia. The original home of the Asuras was in Central Asia but the cradle of their civilization came to be in India. Similarly the Vedic Aryans came from Central Asia but their civilization too reached its peak in India during the Buddhistic civilization. Both the Asuras and the Vedic Aryans paid back their debt to Central Asia by teaching them the new civilized way of life. How the Asuras civilized Central Asia is being gradually brought to light by the Soviet archaeologists as has already been indicated in our third chapter. What

the Aryans of India taught to the people of the same regions has been long known from the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims and the researches of Aurel Stein. The Gupta period is known to historians as the Golden Age. In our view there was an earlier Golden Age in the history of India which commenced with Janamejaya II and ended with Aśoka.

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